MEXICON *IV*

PROGRAMME BOOK

Mexicon IV

3-6 May 1991
The Cairn Hotel, Harrogate

Programme Book

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Welcome to Mexicon IV

Well, hombres and conchitas, here we are again. Who'd have thought in 1984 that Mexicon would still be going strong seven years later? It's been a hectic few months, contacting programme participants, hustling up equipment, registering the usual last-minute rush of members; now, as we enter the home stretch, we're convinced that it will prove worthwhile. We've got a splendid programme, and plenty of the extras which make a Mexicon special.

Our guests this time are **Iain Sinclair**, **Howard Waldrop**, and **Paul Williams**, and between them they sum up what Mexicon's about. Sinclair's a very British, very surrealistic writer whose works cross genres and mainstream — somebody who SF readers will want to know about. His latest book, *Downriver*, has attracted attention in all quarters.

The news that Howard Waldrop is coming has been met with overwhelming enthusiasm both from those who've met him before and those who've simply read his stories. If you haven't read his short-story collection Strange Things in Close-up, by the end of the con you'll want to.

Paul Williams is a critic, a Philip K Dick expert (and literary executor), and many things besides. He has deep roots in fandom, and a thousand tales to tell.

Our programme covers the usual eclectic range, from werewolves to space opera via criticism, obsession, and SF classics. Full details are contained in the centre section of this book, along with the membership list and a plan of the hotel.

I've tried in this programme book to relate articles to specific programme items. **Colin Greenland**'s essay on *New Worlds* provides an insight into the magazine as it was and as it will be. **Paul Kincaid** presents the case for the revival of space opera, Dave Langford introduces an author who is gone but all-too-understandably forgotten, and Paul Williams has chosen a classic short story and shown how it has relevance today. Langford also provides a searingly truthful slant on one of the subjects of our sidebar programme, an innovation we hope you'll enjoy. But, since context is all-important, I've asked Roz Kaveney to review the last two years in SF, and done the same for fandom myself; and since Mexicon wouldn't be Mexicon without some Desperate Fun, David Garnett reveals all about his travels in Mexico. Interior illustrations are a selection from our ATom display; it's said that Arthur Thomson can't be with us, but his drawings can still give us pleasure for years to come.

Mexicon is a small convention with big ideas, and we wouldn't be able to carry them out without first, generous support from sponsors, and second, a lot of hard work by committee members and others. So I'd like to thank all our sponsors, who are individually credited in the programme section; and the indefatigable **Gamma**, whose efforts to raise sponsorship were so successful. Special thanks to **Nick Austin**, ex-editorial director at Grafton, for his help in bringing Iain Sinclair to the convention. Thanks are also due to **Harry Bell**, for the cover illustration; **Roger Robinson**, quiz-setter; **Vince Clarke**, for lending his electrostenciller; **Lee Montgomerie**, **Caroline Mullan**, **Bernie Peek**, and **Dave Langford**, for help with publications; the **Conception** committee, for help at the conception; USexCo; everyone who suggested ideas, helped make contacts, or lent ATom work for the display. Ex-committee members **Greg Pickersgill** and **Martin Tudor** also (obviously) put in a lot of work early on; thanks to them.

Abigail Frost

Steam-Engine Time

Roz Kaveney presents a personal view of SF since the last Mexicon

Sometimes you are just so embarrassed by science fiction that you want to tear it down, or up; sometimes the memory of past highs makes you content to ignore its lapses of good taste and just watch the pretty colours. And sometimes you decide to grit your teeth and not be content until it is done right.

The late 80s was a period when SF seemed to be dominated by what various critics have usefully called "share-cropping"; young writers, and some who should have known better, were taking out collaborative options on the territories of the grand old men — we got Paul Preuss and Gregory Benford setting work in the universe of Arthur C. Clarke and Robert Silverberg writing a sequel to Asimov's *Nightfall*. Not all of this work was worthless — one might pick out in particular the intelligent and illuminating homage and sequel *The Originist* that Orson Scott Card, often a stern critic of this sort of thing, nonetheless managed to write in Isaac Asimov's *Foundation* universe.

Some of the texts share-cropped are almost inalienable parts of the interior landscape of any writer or fan of a later generation; it is possible to engage with the texts, their author and the internal furnishings they have given one's mind in that creative dialectic which produces not only rhetoric, but poetry. Possible, but, in spite of exceptions like the Card, unlikely; we are for the most part talking about projects that people write for the cash nexus, not from the heart — it is significant, after all, that the Card was written for a celebratory anthology, not to order, and that its themes, domestic harmony and disharmony as a spur to intellectual effort, are far more Card's than Asimov's.

The best of the material written for shared world anthologies — the Walter Jon Williams and Howard Waldrop stories for the first *Wild Cards* anthology, for example, or Alan Moore and John M. Ford's contributions to the *Liavek* books — work precisely because the parameters offered by editors related closely to the author's obsessions. The fairly heavy hand of Games Workshop on its various series has not stopped Kim Newman and Ian Watson writing work which is all the more precisely in their own full-blooded voices because the two writers involved are game-players to whom complying with strict rules is a spur rather than a burden; *Drachenfels* and *Krokodil Tears* are as worthwhile as Newman's more thoughtful novels, and the Ian Watson *Inquisitor* material is some of his best long fiction for years. You can only write whole-heartedly in someone else's universe or manner if you can be totally yourself at the same time, but it should not be assumed that this never happens.

The process we observe in Newman's work as Jack Yeovil is after all only a special case of what happens most of the time in genre fiction, arguably in all fiction. We all write our stories in someone else's universe, and this applies to life as well as art. Anyone who waves goodbye to a lover at a railway station does so with the awful probability of hearing *As time goes by* or the Rachmaninov concerto somewhere deep in their heart; we can choose to make this post-modern condition of over-awareness, this plague of inadvertent allusive-

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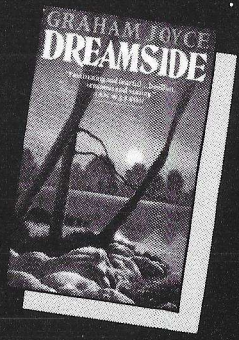

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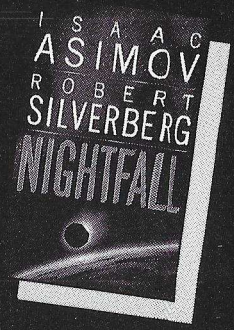

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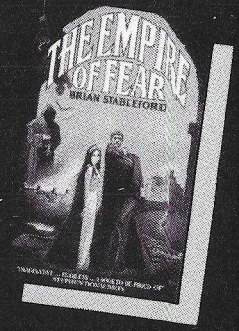

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ness, a source of reinforcing subtext rather than an embarrassment, or the source of a doomed quest for an utterance entirely individual and entirely pure.

Barry Malzberg, that Prophet Jeremiah of the New Wave, partially realised this, but devoted himself to putting all of the garish furniture of pulp into quotation marks, rather than allowing the more sophisticated members of the SF audience to put their own tongues into their own cheeks. One of the great strengths of some recent SF, a typical example being Colin Greenland's *Take Back Plenty*, is that it does all of the wonderful Martian canals, Venusian swamps, sinister all-powerful aliens stuff that we have become blase about and makes it work both as preposterous put-on and as the glorious wide-screen baroque we have starved ourselves of. One of the joys of post-modernism is that we don't have to regard any one model of consensual reality as canonical; which is a rather round about way of saying that we can have our cake and eat it. Writers can pay their debts to the glossy tat that delighted their adolescence, but at the same time rewrite its crass assumptions about class, gender and race, and make over matters and tropes once discarded as cliche as the building blocks of a new and passionately literary space opera.

Several of the best books of the last two years fall into this category, more or less; it is clearly steam-engine time for this particular set of gestures. Simmons's two volumes of *Hyperion Cantos* have their roots in traditional space opera, and in cyberpunk, but the overall effect is of something far richer in specifically literary terms — nor does this derive merely from the Chaucer and Keats references intrinsic to the plot. Simmons, like David Zindell in *Neverness*, has exploited the freedom for us by Gene Wolfe to have our cake and eat it, to reconcile the Golden Age and the New Wave. One of the several interesting things about Ian M. Banks' *Culture* novels is that they are set up so that they could only be told in a mode that reconciles the traditional and the experimental; this applies in particular to *Use of Weapons* where the two strands of narrative move in opposite chronological directions towards a final logical revelation that could not be so heart-breaking were it told in any other way...

This project of intertwining the old and the new seems a rather more worthwhile project, because a more practical one, than that of using SF as a vehicle for saving the world, or for instructing it in moral or scientific truths. If cyberpunk ever had a strength apart from the gaudy images it briefly naturalised, and which have rapidly become the stock in trade of competent SF adventure writing, it was in the sense that here was the cutting edge of something, the knowledge that here was William Gibson inventing imagery in fiction to describe what was going on in the laboratory, and that the scientists developing virtual reality were reading his fiction about it along with the rest of us, that art was conditioning the direction of science as well as the other way round. This was a moment of real excitement, but for the moment it is over; if Gibson and Sterling's *Difference Engine* was in some respects a rather soulless game, it was because it was necessary for both of them to retreat from the cutting edge and look at the influence of science on social change in some entirely different context. Unfortunately, their sense of the British C19 they altered with computers and a high-tech police state was shakier than their sense o the near future, or perhaps only more obviously so.

With virtual reality less than a decade away from high street electronics stores, the hard science boys have had to pitch their tents elsewhere. Nanotechnology seems to be the next brand name of that technology which is indistinguishable from magic and thus efficiently motivates stories: Greg Bear and Michael Swanwick are making effective use of the molecular level transformation of matter as a story motive and metaphor. Bear's *Queen of*

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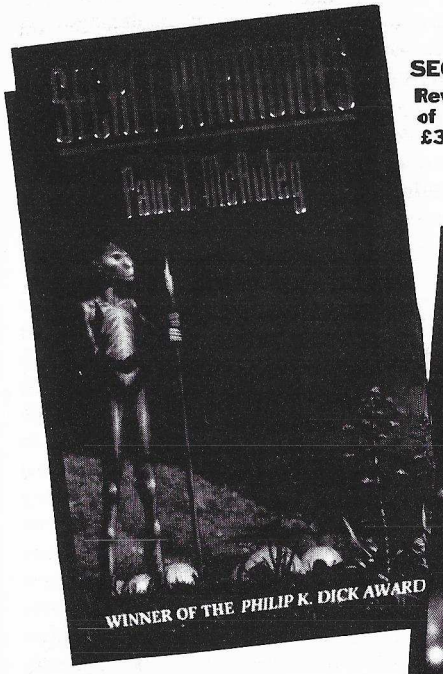

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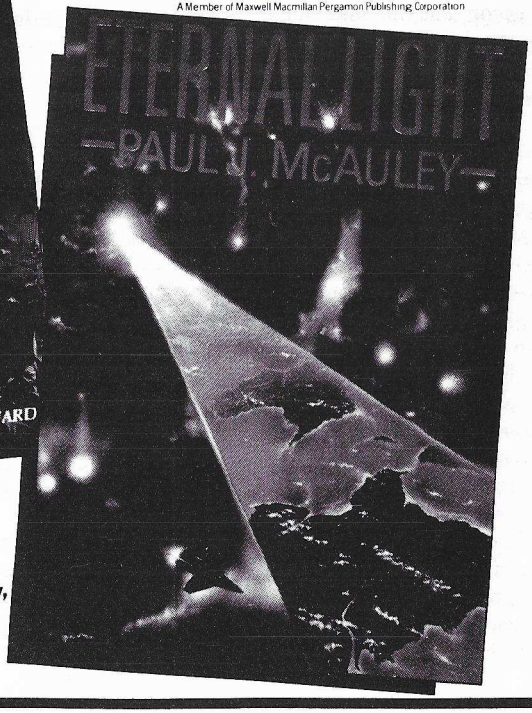

ETERNAL LIGHT
is McAuley's *2001: A Space Odyssey*; it will place him with Clarke and Asimov, in the top echelon of S.F. writers.

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Angels ends up being no more than a detective story with powerful trimmings; Swanwick's *Stations of the Tide* is on the surface a passionate fairytale of intrigue, but its real strength is the armature of scientific possibility underlying the gaudiness.

Brin's *Earth* is an honourable attempt to batter us into ecological awareness; there are some stories that have to be told, and will probably not be told by the very clever. Allan Steele has brought a shop-steward's awareness of rebellion against the company and the company store to the gung-ho story of near space colonization. My favourite hard SF of the last two years though is probably *Days of Atonement*, in which Walter Jon Williams combines genres promiscuously — a near future hard SF Western psychological thriller in which a not especially bright and deeply psychotic local sheriff is obliged to understand quantum physics to solve his case; Agent Cooper, eat your heart out.

The text of the best hard SF is always the amorality of rapid social change; much of the best SF of the late 80s is a powerful morality play. Lucius Shepard continues his cycle of powerful short stories in which the arrogance of the First World is humbled; Pat Murphy's *The city, not long after* shows a city of artists surrealistically humiliating a post-collapse military takeover.

Significantly, both of these writers rely as heavily on fantasy tropes as on SF ones to promulgate an essentially progressive message: the tropes of SF alone fit neatly enough with a far more conservative, though not reactionary, set of moralities in the work of Orson Scott Card. As one of many who dismissed the early work of Card abusively, it is with mixed pleasure that I have to acknowledge that he has become an important, and a powerful writer. Both the Alvin sequence and the Ender Wiggins sequence worry passionately at aspects of the Messianic role; *Xenocide*, the third of the Ender Wiggins novels, is a particularly powerful handling of relations between radically different human, and alien, cultures precisely because it is so deeply informed by the author's religious beliefs, and the complex balancing act probably necessary for any intelligent believer. To have simultaneously to accept two sets of truth largely at odds with each other is not the worst training for a writer.

Sometimes the truths that have to be balanced are inconsistent with any narrow definition of SF; it is not only in the work of Shepherd and Murphy that we find the distinction between SF and fantasy blurring, or our interest carrying across from the one to the other. Mary Gentle's *Rats and Gargoyles* is fantasy in that it deals with alchemy and angels, SF in that the motive force of its story-telling is thinking one's way through the characters' problems. Jonathan Carroll's *Outside the Dog Museum* takes the tower of Babel, one of the most definitive of those myths that underlie SF, and makes it intrinsic to his running sequence of fantasy novels. Much of that mainstream fiction which draws on the tropes of SF does so in a way which apprehends the ideas magically rather than logically; Ted Mooney's wonderful and long-awaited *Traffic and Laughter* is largely motivated by the alternate world trope, but does not pretend seriously to develop the difference between this world and ours as more than a given.

Part of the process of being true to the past of the genre is the creation of the canon; one of the crucial events of the last few years has been the editing of definitive collections or selections of some of the best SF short story writers, notably the complete short stories of Philip K. Dick and Robert Sheckley and selections of the works of Leiber and James Tiptree. SF is not a museum, nor should be allowed to become one; yet, if we are to change it, redeem its imagery into the stuff of a worthwhile literary genre, we have to understand, and accept for good and ill, its past.

The shape of reading to come!

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Jeremiah Cornelius and the Camelot Baseball Embargo

Colin Greenland examines the phenomenon of neocosmophobia

"What have I bought?" repeats Dave Garnett, editor of *New Worlds*. "I've bought 'The Descent of Man'. That's a story by Matthew Dickens. It's set in a society which is free-falling through space. I'm buying a story by Charles Stross and Simon Ings, quite a long one. And I've had a story from Michael Moorcock, which I'm working on at the moment."

Garnett does his best to read every manuscript that comes in. Can he see any pattern, any trend yet? "From America I've had a baseball story — I've had a Camelot story."

What does that suggest?

"People who are going to send any old crap are sending it. There's no way round that. People hear you're buying and they send you whatever's come back in the post that morning. But I've had nothing from any US name authors, and only six of the 19 people I published in *Zenith* have submitted. It's as if people are scared of *New Worlds*."

Scared? Of an original anthology? Of a paperback magazine?

It's magic. In British SF circles, the very name *New Worlds* has mana. Twelve years since the last issue, people still care about it. When in the interim *Interzone* appeared, people clamoured against it for not being *New Worlds*. When I first told the Mexicon programming committee that *New Worlds* was coming back, everyone was surprised and excited, far more so than if I'd said there was going to be a Zenith3. And can it really be coincidence that Denmark's extinct SF magazine, being revived at this very moment, is also called *New Worlds*?

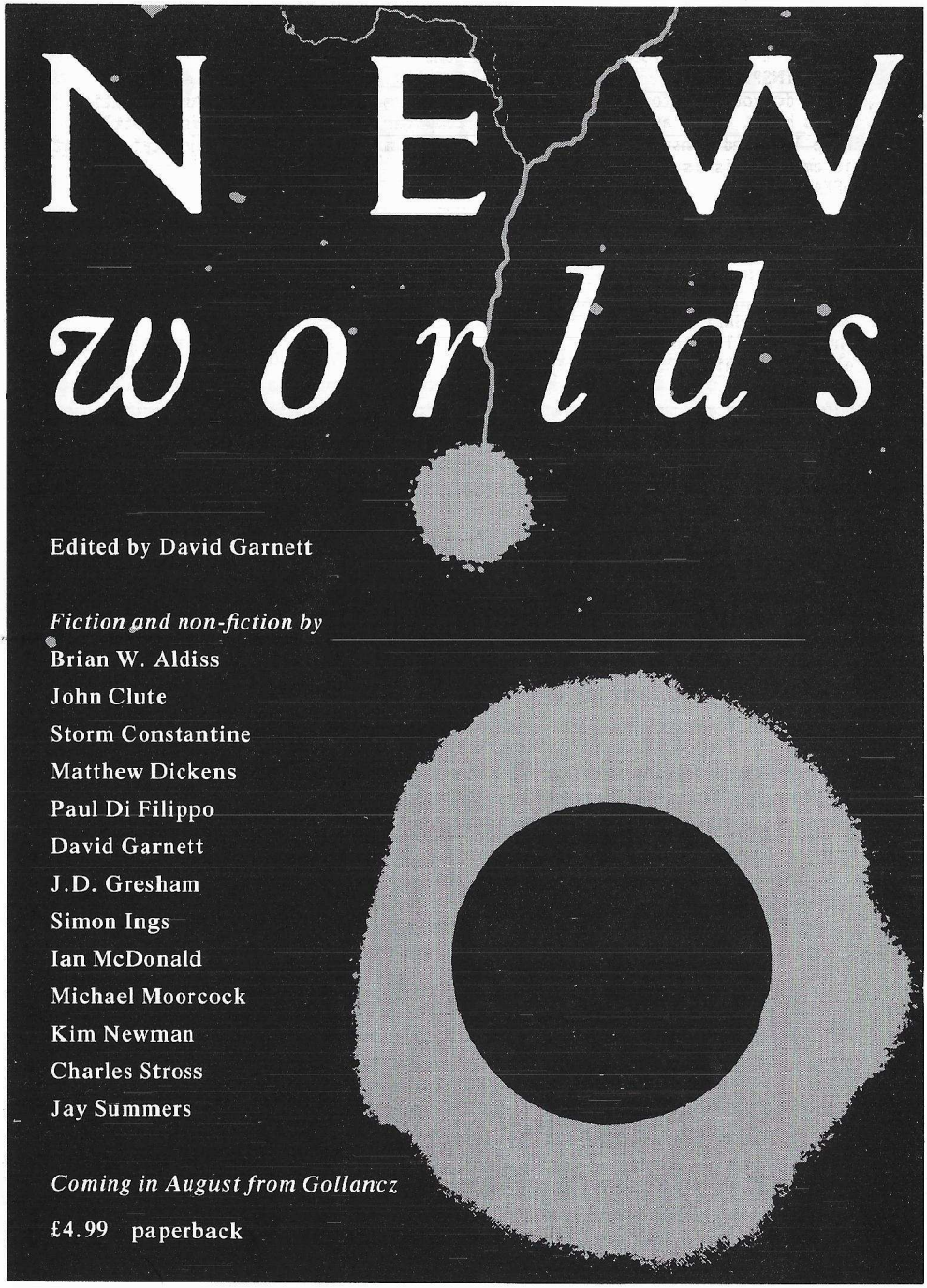
Nostradamus prophesied all this, you know. Apparently he said there was going to be this science fiction magazine. It would come and go. There would be portents and crises. Its powers of survival and self-regeneration would prove to be remarkable.

And it would come again.

"I don't think it's safe to say that *New Worlds* is dead," Moorcock wrote in 1981. He told me in 1989 he'd got his hands on some good material and was considering publishing another issue himself. When I asked him about it a month or so later he denied vehemently that the horrifying thought had even crossed his mind, let alone his lips. "I must have been drunk," he said, warningly. "Or mad."

Fear of *New Worlds*, that enigmatic unslumbering succubus, is not unknown. Unlike the elusive Last Dangerous Visions, the vast, fabled white whale that Capt. Ellison is doomed to hunt through icy seas until the crack of doom, *New Worlds* is always with us.

At the end of the 70s I wrote a book about it. I mentioned that it had started as a fanzine and flourished as a professional mag under E J Carnell from 1946-64, but it was what happened next that magnetised me: Moorcock's editorship, the fever and fireworks of the "New Wave". I was unafraid, but certainly in awe of it. It was all over by then, but I was caught in the afterburn. I couldn't follow a lot of the contents; some put me to sleep; but the rest, the rest — the elegantly paranoid pavanes of J G Ballard... the eclipses and enigmas of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In *The Entropy Exhibition* I got off on the wrong foot by blindly assuming, in the face of all the evidence, that this was all some sort of answer to the generic limitations of science fiction. It was nothing of the kind. It wasn't even having the conversation. It was the white-hot slurry of garage postmodernism, surging up into the place only Moorcock (with Ballard, Langdon Jones and Charles Platt) were ambitious enough to provide for it. It was nothing of any kind but its own.

What Moorcock's *New Worlds* published, the fragmented novels and quantified fictions, with their numbered paragraphs and gnomic titles, their stochastic plots and verbal diagrams, ironic apocalypses and entropic melting drama — they weren't written in defiance of rules, they were just too urgent and spontaneous and strong to notice the need for any: "just as," Moorcock wrote in the introduction to Flamingo's retrospective selection, "in the early days, it was possible to do interesting work in popular music as a rock and roll performer. There was no sense of having someone looking over your shoulder."

New Worlds was unique. It was of its time, ineluctably then, like *Oz* and *Frendz*, all the "underground" papers, but nothing like them at all. At its peak, in 1968, it was an overwhelmingly stimulating, sceptical, high, vibrant magazine of cultural commentary, poetry, graphics and anarchic fiction. Its frisson wasn't simply the outlaw glamour of a magazine W H Smith declared obscene and libellous, a magazine its own distributors wouldn't touch, a magazine that had provoked displeasure in high places. It was the sense that every time you opened the cover you could never tell what you were going to find.

At the time, Dave Garnett used to buy all the SF magazines, "but Moorcock's *New Worlds* was always the one I looked forward to the most. It was always different, you had no idea what to expect. A lot of what it published wasn't strictly genre SF. A lot of what's in the new one won't be. The borders between fantasy and SF, between SF and the mainstream, are more nebulous now than ever."

I never read *New Worlds*. Never saw an issue until it was all over and done. But I remember the very day I first saw *New Worlds* Quarterly 1, and picked it up, and knew that it was for me.

New Worlds Quarterly followed the final collapse of *New Worlds* magazine, and that was where I came in. I'd read some Ballard, some Aldiss, Keith Roberts, Mervyn Peake, a bit of Ellison, a lot of miscellaneous sword and sorcery. Suddenly it all meant something. NWQ1 brought it all together in a big heady rush. It gave me the illusion of grabbing on to something big that was moving past me, kicking up a lot of dust in its wake.

As a paperback original anthology, *New Worlds* ran to only ten issues in five years, changing publishers and editors along the way. There was some excellent stuff in those books — bits of 334 and The Chalk Giants and Billion Year Spree, Rachel Pollack and Geoff Ryman's first stories, Eleanor Arnason, Robert Meadley, the snarky, sinewy M John Harrison, some fine Sladek, Moorcock's Dancers at the End of Time, the best things Barry Bayley ever wrote... but in truth, the carnival had gone by. There's something about the mutation from magazine to paperback book, from newsstand to revolving rack, that cools and slows and shrinks things. There isn't the same space for enterprising and engaging design, for instance. Shelf-life is prolonged. Personality recedes.

After the paperbacks came the five irregular, fugitive issues, produced by different people with different ideas, many of them in the form of graphics, collage, xeroxes, strange,

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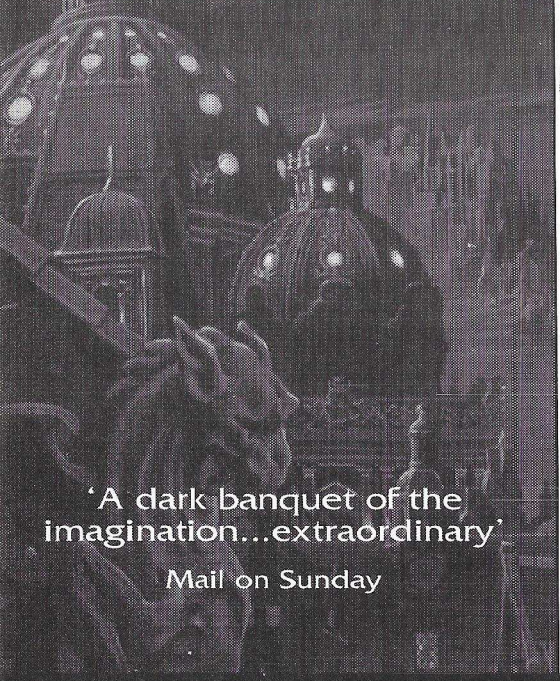

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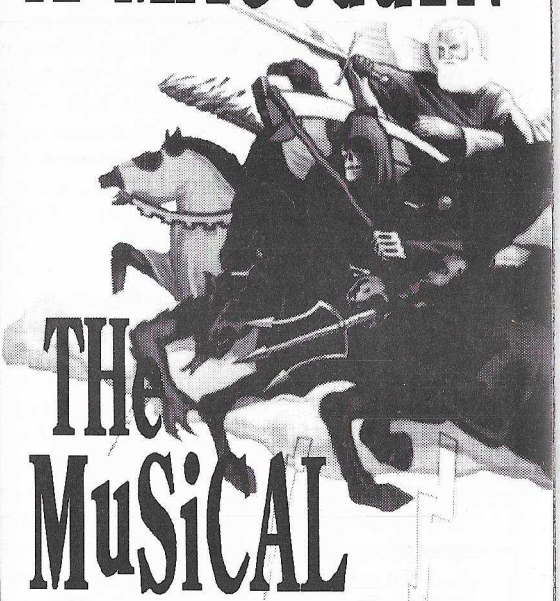

THE MUSICAL

ROBERT RANKIN

'He crams enough gags in to last anyone else for a trilogy. And nothing's sacred...'

Terry Pratchett

CORGI SCIENCE FANTASY

oblique pastiches of this and that. *New Worlds* was up and running around again, chirping and snarling in the shrubbery. Moorcock has kept the rights to the title, so he can produce an issue whenever he feels like it, or lend it to someone else for an issue of four.

Which is what's happening now..

When Macdonald cancelled *Zenith*, disappointed by the sales of the first tow volumes, Dave Garnett took it to a number of other publishers. Richard Evans at Gollancz was interested in picking it up. Impressed by what Garnett had done with *Zenith*, Moorcock offered them the *New Worlds* title, with all its history, its implications, its openness — its magic, in a word — and his own services as consulting editor. They liked the idea.

"Moorcock says he'll be our figurehead," says Garnett, who has no worries about who'll be looking over his shoulder, no fear of *New Worlds*. Too many years have gone by since the messianic editorials proclaiming a whole new kind of literature, not to mention a whole new critical toolkit to discuss it with. Not that all that early effort and aggression were wasted. Garnett speaks for a generation of us when he says: "The magazine was a major influence on my early writing simply because it was there. It was Mike who sent me my first rejection slip, with a scribbled note of encouragement on the top. And when I wrote my first novel, my first rejection was from Gollancz... When you're starting out, you need someone to send stories to, even if they don't buy them: someone who will read them and respond."

Speaking for a minute as one of "his" authors, I must say what Storm Constantine and Liz Sourbut and Simon Ings and Bill King have all said too: David S Garnett is an ace editor. Though undeniably more your Ted Carnell than your Michael Moorcock, he is incredibly painstaking, sensitive and practical, and he has the ability to detect exactly what you were trying to do all along. In an editorial discussion with him, you become increasingly aware that your brilliant story was in fact only a pale sketch of itself, but now you know how to do it properly. Garnett is an editor who loves editing. He enjoys what he does as much as we do. "The author has a vision; you have a vision; you talk about it with them, and the story comes back even better. That's what makes it worthwhile."

Without living magazines and responsive editors, he thinks, things stagnate. "Well into the 80s, people like Chris Priest, Rob Holdstock, Lisa Tuttle, Chris Evans and me — we were still the young ones!" It wasn't until the arrival of *Interzone*, he says, followed by Other Edens and *Zenith*, that we started to see a new generation. "There are more good new writers around now than at any time since *New Worlds* was in its prime."

How does he see his relationship to David Pringle? "We complement each other. I buy his rejects, he buys mine. My rejects from *Zenith* have turned up in *Asimov's*, even in Dozois's and Wollheim's *Year's Best* collections. I still wouldn't have bought them!"

So what can *New Worlds* do that the American magazines can't do? "Publish British authors." he says at once. There are only a few British authors who get published in the American magazines. There seems to be this big barrier between us. Some British writers don't even submit stuff to them, because of that. I like American SF," says the man who caught some flak for filling the Orbit Yearbooks with it, "but it's got plenty of outlets. I prefer what British authors are writing."

Which is?

"More thoughtful SF," he hazards. "What can you say? It's all generalising, isn't it? But you can tell them this: what I want in *New Worlds* is SF that will set the pace for the next decade. The next century! Something that's different enough, that doesn't just recycle all the cliches. SF that's exciting, well-told, inventive — that's not too much to ask, is it?"

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Seduction of the Body Politic

Paul Williams looks at the impact of Sturgeon's "Mr Costello, Hero" in 1991

"To the extent that the short story is an art, Theodore Sturgeon is *the* American short story writer. The corpus of Sturgeon's stories ranks with de Maupassant's."

Samuel R Delany

Letters to the Editor
The Press Democrat
Santa Rosa, CA 95402

Editor —

I have a new focus for my anger the last couple of days; it's the word "softening". Every time I turn on the radio, every time I pick up a newspaper, I see all these journalists, as if they were all fed their words on the exact same chow line, explaining that "the Allied bombing is softening up the enemy in preparation for the land war."

Softening! No one ever uses any word that would communicate that what we are actually doing is killing and horribly maiming *people*, young people, presumably by the thousands or tens of thousands — that we are in fact the confederates of Mr Hussein, an evil man who has forced most of these conscripts to join the army and fight his purposeless, endless war — we are allied with him in bringing death and dismemberment to these young persons, to further his political aims and our own.

And our journalists are, frankly, so near-sighted, so cowardly, so intellectually lazy, that they universally and eagerly embrace the word "softening". as if it were just the precise description of history-in-the-making they've always been looking for and are so proud to be part of. I call them collaborators. The president, the dictator, and the journalists/propagandists. Happy bedfellows. 1991's masters of war.

Paul Williams
Glen Ellen, California

What makes a short story writer great is the enduring relevance of what his or her stories communicate, and the impact of those stories on the individual reading them. Political stories often have considerable short-term impact, but for enduring relevance and universality writers and readers generally turn to stories of survival (man against man, man against the elements) or to love stories.

Indeed, it has been said, by Sturgeon among others, that all of Theodore Sturgeon's stories are about love. This is untrue. Love is absent or is a very secondary theme in many of Sturgeon's finest tales — for example, "The Comedian's Children," "When You're Smiling," and "Mr Costello, Hero". These could, in fact, be described as stories of hatred. The author's ability to express and communicate his own feelings of hatred (towards a particular person or type of person), and to awaken similar feelings in his readers, it she key to these stories' power. Another way of describing what these stories have in common (along with other Sturgeon classics such as "Baby is Three" and "The Other Man") is to say that

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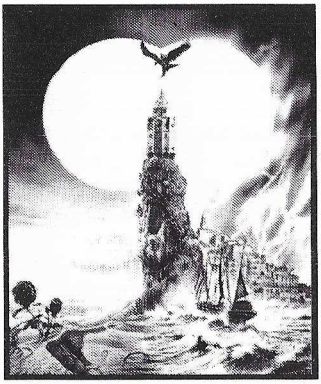

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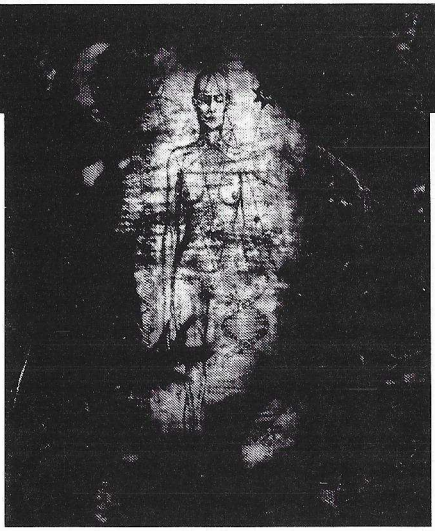

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HEADLINE FEATURE

they are about demons — a very specific and modern and alas non-fantastic sort of demon, the psychopath or sociopath.

"Mr Costello, Hero," written and published in 1952, represents Theodore Sturgeon's effort to come to terms with the anti-Communist "witch hunts" that dominated intellectual and political life in the United States in the early 1950s, thanks in large part to the charismatic and, if you will, evil presence of a man named Senator Joe McCarthy. The extraordinary and very disturbing relevance of this story for readers almost four decades later (and after the collapse of both Communism and anti-Communism) is, among other things, a tribute to the usefulness of science fiction as a storytelling method or form or technique.

Sturgeon made indirect reference to this in an interview conducted by Darrel Schweitzer and published in *Science Fiction Review* 20, February 1977:

> I had a deadline, and Horace Gold called me up and said, "Hey, where's the novelet?" And I began to cry a lot over the telephone. This was the time of the McCarthy hearings. The whole country was in a grip of terror that not having ben through it you would just never understand how awful that was. It was a *frightening* thing. It crept into all the corners of the houses and everybody's speech and language. Everybody started to get super-careful about what they said, what they wrote and what they broadcast.
>
> I became aware by that time that I had a fairly high-calibre typewriter, and I became alarmed by the fact that I wasn't using it for anything but what I called "the literature of entertainment". I felt I had the tool to do something, but I didn't know what to do with it.
>
> Horace listened to me with great care, and he said, "I'll tell you what to do, Sturgeon. You write me a story about a guy whose wife has gone away for the weekend, and he goes down to the bus station to meet her, and the bus arrives and the whole place is full of people. He looks across the crowd and he sees his wife emerge from the exit talking to a young man who is talking earnestly back to her. And he is carrying her suitcase. She looks across the crowd, sees her husband, speaks a word to the young man and the young man hands her her suitcase, tips his hat and disappears into the crowd, and she comes across to him and kisses him. Now then, Sturgeon, write me that story, and by the time you've finished the whole world will know how you feel about Joe McCarthy."
>
> For a moment I didn't know what the hell he was talking about, and it comes right back to what I was saying earlier. If a writer really and truly believes in something, if he is totally convinced, he has a conviction, it really doesn't matter what he writes about. That conviction is going to come through.
>
> And at that point I sat down and wrote a story called "Mr Costello, Hero"...

I say "indirect reference" because what Sturgeon and Gold are speaking of applies to all forms of writing, SF, mainstream fiction, non-fiction — and yet it is hard to imagine a form of storytelling other than science fiction that could have allowed Sturgeon the kind of fiercely accurate transmutation he achieves in "Mr Costello, Hero". It is absolutely unnecessary to recognise Joe McCarthy in this story, or to know anything about that particular episode in recent American history, to be kicked in the gut and informed and awakened by this far-future parable of a competent but gullible ship's purser and the kind, friendly, persuasive gentleman he meets on a passage between planets.

Great fiction informs and awakens; my belief is that every reasonably intelligent person who reads this story will be to some degree permanently affected by it. Whether they realise it or not, they will be a little less susceptible to the persuasiveness and pervasiveness

of propaganda, specifically that most vital species of propaganda that teaches us who to fear, who to hate. The story shows how it's done. This story is, as far as I know, the all-time masterpiece in the English language on the subject of the seduction of the body politic by means of the manufacture of enemies.

You begin to see why I think this is a piece of writing that can mean a lot to the reader who encounters it (or re-experiences it) in 1991. Indeed, my personal response to the Gulf War, now that the fighting is over at least for now, is to share this story, by reading it aloud to small groups of people, in my home and at the homes of friends and, when possible, in public gatherings. I see this tale as vital information, the kind that perhaps can best be communicated (as Christ practised) through storytelling. I also put it forward as evidence, one of a great many pieces of evidence, that Theodore Sturgeon, little-known though he may be outside the SF community (and even inside it these days) is one of the foremost literary figures of our era.

George Bush was elected President of the United States in 1988 thanks in large part to a series of remarkably well-crafted bits of propaganda designed to fit the contemporary American media and mass sensibilities, stirring up the muck of blind patriotism and race hatred and fear of foreigners in people who would never think of themselves as being vulnerable to such manipulation. In 1990 and '91 he and his cronies went a step further, manipulating not just their countrymen but more or less the entire United Nations. One day Iraq is our friend and we sell them the most sophisticated and dangerous weaponry with impunity; a week later Saddam Hussein is Hitler and his aggression must be stopped at any cost, and throughout the USA and Britain and elsewhere people who really never heard of the guy toll now nod their heads and are ready to sacrifice their kids to the sacred cause.

It happened overnight. It could happen again. Our "free press" (self-proclaimed defender of the truth) crumbled as rapidly and as completely under the onslaught as the Iraqi Republican Guard. And as I cast back over everything I've learned in my life, trying to find something that can help explain what has happened and thereby possibly provide the beginnings of a response, a healing, a revolution, I end up perhaps the science fiction I read as a child, specifically the language and insights and extraordinary angry empathy of Ted Sturgeon:

> "You wouldn't believe it if you hadn't seen it done... What has happened to human beings? Here's distrust by man for man, waiting under a thin skin to be punctured by just the right vampire, waiting to hate itself and kill itself all over again...
>
> "My God, Costello doesn't *care*! It isn't a principle at all. It's just Costello spreading fear anywhere, everywhere, to make himself strong!"
>
> He rushed out, crying with rage and hate. I have to admit I was sort of jolted. I guess I might even have thought about the things he said, only he killed himself before we reached Earth. He was crazy.

I'm not asking you top do anything but read the story. And read it again. Share it with a friend.

I guess I believe that we have to get in touch with our own hatreds and weaknesses in order to withstand or overcome them.

And I believe in the power of fable.

On *Who Put Back the Clock?* by "E.H.B"

Dave Langford's choice of neglected SF author

"E.H.B." followed a tried and tested recipe for becoming a forgotten author. He published only one book which whirled away to oblivion in the torrent of late-Victorian popular fiction; he hid his name behind dully unmemorable initials, not even his own; he wrote poorly. *Who Put Back The Clock?* (1889) duly became yet another remarkable work which appeared for several days upon the railway bookstalls, and then vanished entirely from the face of the earth. Max Beerbohm alluded to it in an essay and the encyclopaedic Brian Stableford mentions it in passing as a work just outside the scope of his *Scientific Romance in Britain 1890-1950*; as far as the mass of SF reference works is concerned, the novel might never have existed.

This is a shame, because it does in fact contain a nasty glimpse of eternity which seems to have influenced SF in an indirect way... perhaps via J.B.S. Haldane, the noted scientist and popularizer of science. Haldane's essay "Some Consequences of Materialism" (in *The Inequality of Man*, 1932) actually quotes — without acknowledgment — chunks of pure "E.H.B."

The novel's thesis is the quintessence of Victorian materialism, and its form vaguely anticipates the "scientific puzzle" story. The hero seems to relive his life again and again. Unlike the protagonist of Ken Grimwood's *Replay* he is powerless in spite of his foreknowledge, unable to change a single event or even speak one altered word. And all this is explained without any traditional recourse to magic, madness or "then he woke up".

Incidentally, one reason for the book's failure might be its sole bit of storytelling originality. By way of build-up Chapter II reappears virtually unchanged as Chapter V, and III as VI, with the explanation of this ploy so long deferred that I suspect many people were exasperated into throwing away the "faulty" volume. Such is the fate of experimental narrative.

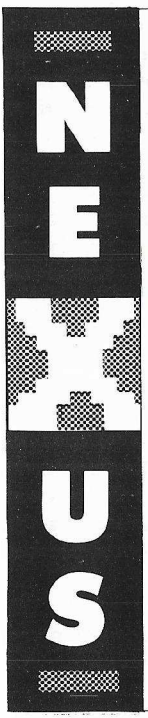
Its ultimate answer lies in the theory of hard-core materialism later and rather better expounded by Haldane. Over infinite time, "E.H.B." argues, everything must recur. There are only so many combinations of atoms to be worked through. Every life will be lived again, infinitely often, identically and deterministically. "Every two persons who meet in the present life have a finite possibility of meeting again, and will therefore do so an infinite number of times, in each case to be parted once more." I quote one of Haldane's verbatim quotations; in the original novel, the sentence meanders on for another two hundred-odd words. And it's supposed to be a single flash of "tragic intellectual effort" at the moment of death!

Even in this author's long-winded prose, the vision is genuinely chilling. Eternal boredom, eternal impotence, eternal punishment without even a vengeful God to blame. An

innovator can perhaps be forgiven a few logical shortcomings: isn't the exact material identity of successive lives inconsistent with the "inherited" memory that all this has happened before? (Exit Cartesian dualism, pursued by a bear.)

I should say that I can find no evidence that Ken Grimwood, or the James Tiptree Jr of "Her Smoke Rose Up Forever", or Charles Harness (*The Ring of Ritornel*), or other obvious SF inheritors of the general notion were ever directly aware of *Who Put Back The Clock?* But Haldane's books of essays had a very wide circulation indeed.

Little is known about "E.H.B." himself. He was reportedly a barrister whose real name was Forsyth, the initials having been "borrowed" from a relative; his life seems to have been humdrum; he never acknowledged his single published work and invariably called writing a "childish art". Nevertheless it was he who first saw and dramatized a nightmare implicit in the infinite materialistic universe of Victorian science. That merits a small footnote in our histories.



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The Programme

This is a provisional running order. We've included times of items for Friday, to enable those receiving this before the con to plan their journey. Times for other days and full details of panellists will be found in our programme sheet at the convention.

Friday

7.00pm: **Mexicon Fiesta**
Meet the committee and guests

followed by:

The Unauthorised Sex Company
in performance
Geoff Ryman, Simon Ings, Colin Greenland and Dave McKean pumping and grinding for your delight

9.00pm **Guest Spot**
Dave Hodson interviews Paul Williams

10.30pm **Not the Terry Wogan Show**
SF's Mr Sophistication (oh, all right then, John Jarrold) in conversation with his selection of guests. Only John knows who they are.

12.00 midnight **Party**
You know how to party, don't you?

Saturday

Auction
Whiz for ATom, for TAFF, for other causes; Rog Peyton does what he loves best — separating fans and their money.

The People

4 Mike Abbott
147 Arnold Akien
186 Gill Alderman
34 Brian Ameringen
249 Christopher Amies
225 Fiona Anderson
280 Jacky Andrew
226 William Armitage
216 Erik Arthur
292 Michael Ashley
136 Hazel Ashworth
137 Mal Ashworth
282 Chris Atkinson
189 K V Bailey
92 Iain Banks
83 Paul Barnett
67 David V Barrett
104 Stephen Baxter
18 Barrington Bayley
214 Deborah Beale
188 Susan Beetlestone
126 Chris Bell
81 Michael J Bernardi
115 Tony Berry
93 Ann Blackburn
28 Harry Bond
278 Lucy V Bond
177 Susan Booth
279 Adrian Bott
201 Michael Braithwaite
230 John Bray
8 Paul Brazier
185 Keith Brooke
146 Faith Brooker
217 Ian Brooks
69 David Bruce
89 Ken Bulmer
121 Ros Calverley
271 Jenny Campbell
273 Matty Campbell
270 Ramsey Campbell
272 Tammy Campbell

239 Avedon Carol
87 Carolyn Caughey
224 Mike Cheater
123 Tony Chester
14 A Vincent Clarke
190 Josie P Claydon
170 John Clute
180 David "Eddie" Cochrane
221 Peter Cohen
276 Philip Collins
195 Storm Constantine
133 David T Cooper
234 Marcus Cooper
202 Mary Corran
291 Del Cotter
246 Peter Crump
53 Roger Culpan
179 Neil Curry
10 John Dallman
77 Huw Davies
286 Meg Davis
144 Peter Day
164 Robert Day
169 Midge Dent
192 Sarah Dibb
235 Matthew Dickens
56 Mike Dickinson
181 Chad Dixon
2 Alan Dorey
1 Rochelle Dorey
48 Paul Dormer
42 Roger Earnshaw
98 Lilian Edwards
131 Helen Eling
130 Stan Eling
24 Dave Ellis
160 David Elworthy
113 Graham England-Koch
107 John English
231 Inge Eriksen
12 Bernie Evans
145 Chris Evans
288 Ian Evans
13 Mick Evans
187 Richard Evans
9 Juliet Eycions

Altered States

As George Bush looks forward to "the next American century", SF writers have been re-writing American history. Howard Waldrop and others discuss the trend towards shuffling the stars and stripes.

It's Not SF But ...

Authors are often asked about their genre influences, but what about non-SF? Which non-SF authors really have the most impact on the field? With the number of books currently published, it's often difficult to find out about nominally non-SF works that are actually of interest to SF readers. Do labels such as Slipstream help to introduce SF fans to good authors outside the field? Moderator: K V Bailey

Acting Up

Mexicon's four performers (USexCo and John Joyce), and Susan Beetlestone, currently involved in playwriting, discuss the problems and practicalities of dramatised readings and presenting SF as performance.

Invisible Cities

Authors who've set novels in real cities (past, present or future, comic or grim) discuss the use they've made of the city. What is it about "their" city that inspires them? Is the character of the city in their work drawn from the real city, or is it a city of their imagination? Moderator: Paul Brazier

Sponsored by Transworld

New Life in Old Genres

What are the technical problems of working in a sub-genre? Are its conventions an obstacle or a help? They may be subverted or played to. The language itself may be loaded with conventions and associations. How do you set about breathing new life into a subgenre? Moderator: Tom Shippey

Guest Spot

Iain Sinclair reads from his own work, and Paul Kincaid interviews him.

Sponsored by Grafton

Paul McAuley Book Launch
Party sponsored by Gollancz and Orbit

Disco
Continue to party ...

Sunday

Morning Movie Time
Surprise item — you won't be disappointed!

A Long Time Ago in a Galaxy Far Far Away
Where is the current resurgence of space opera coming from? Is the template for space opera to be found in media SF now? And have Star Trek/Star Wars made the genre respectable again? Space opera seems to be far more literary this time around. Why? Moderator: Rog Peyton
Sponsored by Orbit

Better Than Life?
Obsession in many guises appears to be a central feature of SF — and of its fans. Why does this happen, how does it start? Is it something about SF or something about the people involved that makes SF an all-consuming passion for many people, from Trekkies to completist book collectors and first and special edition maniacs? Moderator: Ian Sorenson

The Fanzine Panel
The late 80s have seen the rise of the semi-prozine: realistically priced, smartly DTP'd, but in content sometimes reminiscent of the late and unlamented fiction fanzines. What's their impact on the traditional fanzine? Joseph Nicholas has suggested that it's time for fanzine editors to view themselves as part of a wider world of amateur publishing. Are we seeing the death of a unique art-form, or the start of a renaissance? Moderator: Abigail Frost

Small But Perfectly Formed
Everyone knows the "classic" SF novels, but what are the best SF short stories ever written,

247 Stuart Falconer
39 Nic Farey
262 Marianne Fisher
261 Nigel Fisher
242 Richard Fitzgerald
27 Mike Ford
254 Estelle Fortnam
135 Vikki Lee France
76 Susan Francis
60 Keith Freeman
61 Wendy Freeman
33 Abigail Frost
151 Neil Gaiman
157 Kathy Gale
236 Gamma
31 David Garnett
227 Peter T Garratt
40 Ron Gemmell
114 Mary Gentle
150 Steven Glover
55 Margaret Gordon
148 Jason Grant
208 Roger Gray
102 Carol Ann Green
125 Steve Green
36 Colin Greenland
57 Jackie Gresham
108 Philip Groves
295 Paul Grunwell
289 Michael Hall
299 P F Hamilton
62 Kay Hancox
240 Rob Hansen
229 Bridget "Bug" Hardcastle
11 Colin Harris
141 Eve Harvey
140 John Harvey
174 S C Hatch
305 Karen Heenan
215 Robert A Hepworth
302 Douglas Hill
298 Terry Hill
297 Michelle Hodgson
38 Dave Hodson
175 Steve Hubbard
182 Terry Hunt
68 L J Hurst

52 Tim Illingworth
198 Simon Ings
88 Rob Jackson
277 Maxim Jakubowski
183 Rhodri James
49 John Jarrold
165 Terry Jeeves
166 Valerie Jeeves
134 Steve Jeffery
32 Frances Jobling
283 Jane Johnson
194 Gwyneth Jones
129 Jenny Jones
156 Stephen Jones
264 Graham Joyce
274 John Joyce
259 Kevin R Joyce
243 Dick Jude
260 David Julyan
99 Roz Kaveney
205 Debbi Kerr
218 Barbara Kershaw
19 Paul Kincaid
255 Tim Kirk
74 Cedric Knight
209 Keith Knight
103 Peter J Knight
15 Linda Krawecke
152 Christina Lake
45 Colin Langeveld
142 Dave Langford
143 Hazel Langford
155 Alice Lawson
154 Steve Lawson
75 Richard Lewis
248 Mick Lyons
281 Alasdair Mackintosh
269 Brian Magorrian
149 Nicholas Mahoney
252 Paul Marrow
101 Jean Maudsley
23 Catherine McAulay
58 Paul J McAuley
304 Helen McNabb
293 Perry Middlemiss
219 Carl Midgley
78 Nick Mills

and why? Are great stories produced by following an ideal template, or is each unique and unrepeatable? Is it right that the short story should be maligned as an art compared to novel writing, when a good short story requires every word to pull its weight? Moderator: Maureen Speller

Again, New Worlds

Britain's favourite SF magazine is coming back, with any luck to hit its half-century. *New Worlds* people (old and new) look at its past achievements, its present reputation and its future role. Moderator: Keith Knight

Sponsored by Gollancz

Guest Spot

Howard Waldrop reading and interview (with Roz Kaveney).

Sponsored by Arrow

What Makes a Werewolf Tick?

Werewolves, vampires, and monsters in general — where would fantasy be without them? In the 1960s, vampires became much more sympathetic than the purely evil creatures of earlier tradition. Why? And is this process now being reversed? The monsters in Brian Stableford's current trilogy do not act from evil alone but have a society with its own culture and aims. Why is this approach relatively rare? Are all monsters really derived from the Jekyll and Hyde concept, in that they simply reflect aspects of ourselves? Moderator: Kim Newman

Fifteen To One Quiz

Roger Robinson and victims reveal how much they know

Philip K Dick's Metz Speech

Performed by John Joyce, introduced by Paul Williams

Monday

Gone But Not Forgotten

Great works of SF, neither big sellers nor critically acclaimed (and often out of print) — who are they, where are they, should they be more widely read? The volume of SF available and the relative youth of many SF readers mean that a lot of gold is buried in the mud of the average second-hand bookshop. Panellists will introduce and discuss their favourites in this category. Moderator: Andrew Stephenson

New Maps of Limbo

Some writers (William Gibson, J G Ballard) have proposed that SF is the only way to write about "today" rather than the past. Could this be a case of not seeing the wood for the trees? "Today" is all around us, and we are too close to the changes and trends of the present to see which are important and which trivial. SF steps back from the present and extrapolates possible futures and alternatives. Is it therefore the only way to gain an objective perspective on the things that surround us? If mythologies are ways of explaining phenomena that we do not understand, is SF a mythology for now? Moderator: John Clute

Read it and Weep!

This panel considers the importance of criticism in the production of books. How do authors know they're doing the right thing with a book? At what stage do they show it to anybody else, and when they do, who do they choose? And how do they criticise the work as they are producing it? Moderator: Paul Kincaid

The Navel-Gazing Panel

The inevitable item without which no Mexicon would be complete: a free-ranging discussion of the state of play in conventions, fanzines, fandom, etc. Be there or be square. Moderator: Caroline Mullan

Closing Ceremony

Watch Mexicon IV fade into the wide blue yonder, shower the committee with praise, moan about the quiz winners ... Goodbyeeee!

294 Robyn Mills
127 Keith Mitchell
25 A N G Mittenshaw-Hodge
51 Debby Moir
50 Mike Moir
203 Jason Monaghan
71 Lee Montgomerie
193 Dave Mooring
110 John Mottershead
223 Steve Mowbray
275 Michelle Muijsert
35 Caroline Mullan
207 Penny Myles
106 Kim Newman
79 Robert Newman
73 Cherry Newton
72 Henry Newton
244 Mick Norman
301 Cecil Nurse
7 Chris O'Shea II
196 Ruth Oakley
162 Ian Oldfield
17 Dave Packwood
116 Darroll Pardoe
117 Rosemary Pardoe
285 John Richard Parker
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86 Roger Perkins
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16 Greg Pickersgill
213 Derek Pickles
41 Mark Plummer
206 Simon Polley
120 Humphrey Price
228 David Pringle
158 Trevor Prinn
54 Terry Pyle
184 Phil Race
287 Robert Rankin
111 Malcolm Reid
168 Alastair Reynolds
167 Andy Richards
176 John D Rickett
253 Dave M Roberts

109 Graeme Roberts
232 Andy Robertson
233 Sylvia Robertson
22 Roger Robinson
284 T R Robinson
173 Geoff Ryman
296 Ian Sales
139 Bruce Saville
119 Johan Schimanski
5 Alison Scott
6 Mike Scott
212 Andrew Seaman
95 Moira Shearman
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Sidebar Programme

A new departure for Mexicon. Towards the end of programme slots, you'll find readings and short talks going on in the Library, which has a capacity of 30-40 people. A member of the committee will be on hand to introduce sidebar items and take part in the discussion. See *Cactus Times* for each day's list of readers and speakers, and other events in the Library.

Sunday's sidebar items are sponsored by Headline.

Author Readings

Readings will probably last about 15 minutes; there may be discussion afterwards, but this is up to the author in question.

I Wish I'd Written That

Authors present a short talk about something they wish they'd written — it might be a book, a comic, a story or almost anything.

Conditions Of Work

Writers talk about the way they work and the conditions they work under. For instance, do they/can they work full time, or at a particular time of day. Do they need seclusion or do they have their best ideas in pubs and cafes, or with children around their feet? Is it one long slow grind or a case of inspiration followed by short bursts of frantic activity? And where do they get their crazy ideas?

The Hotel

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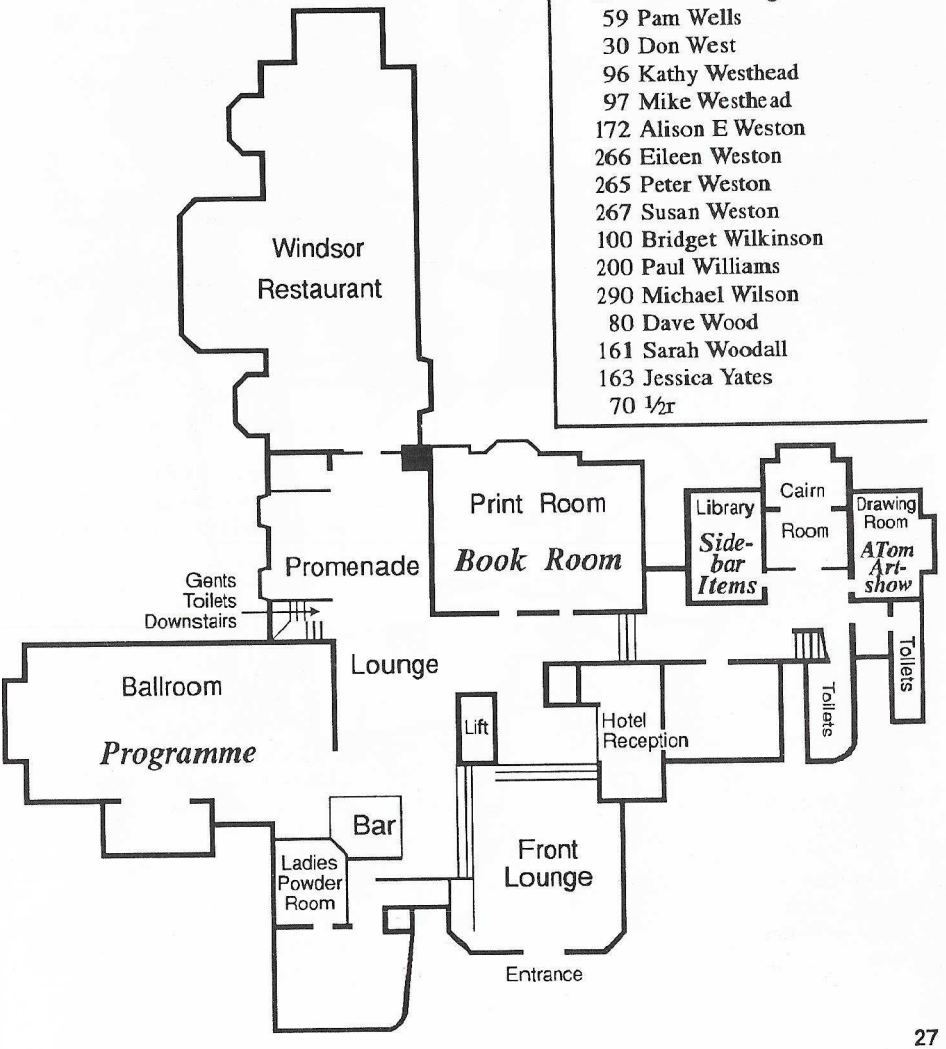

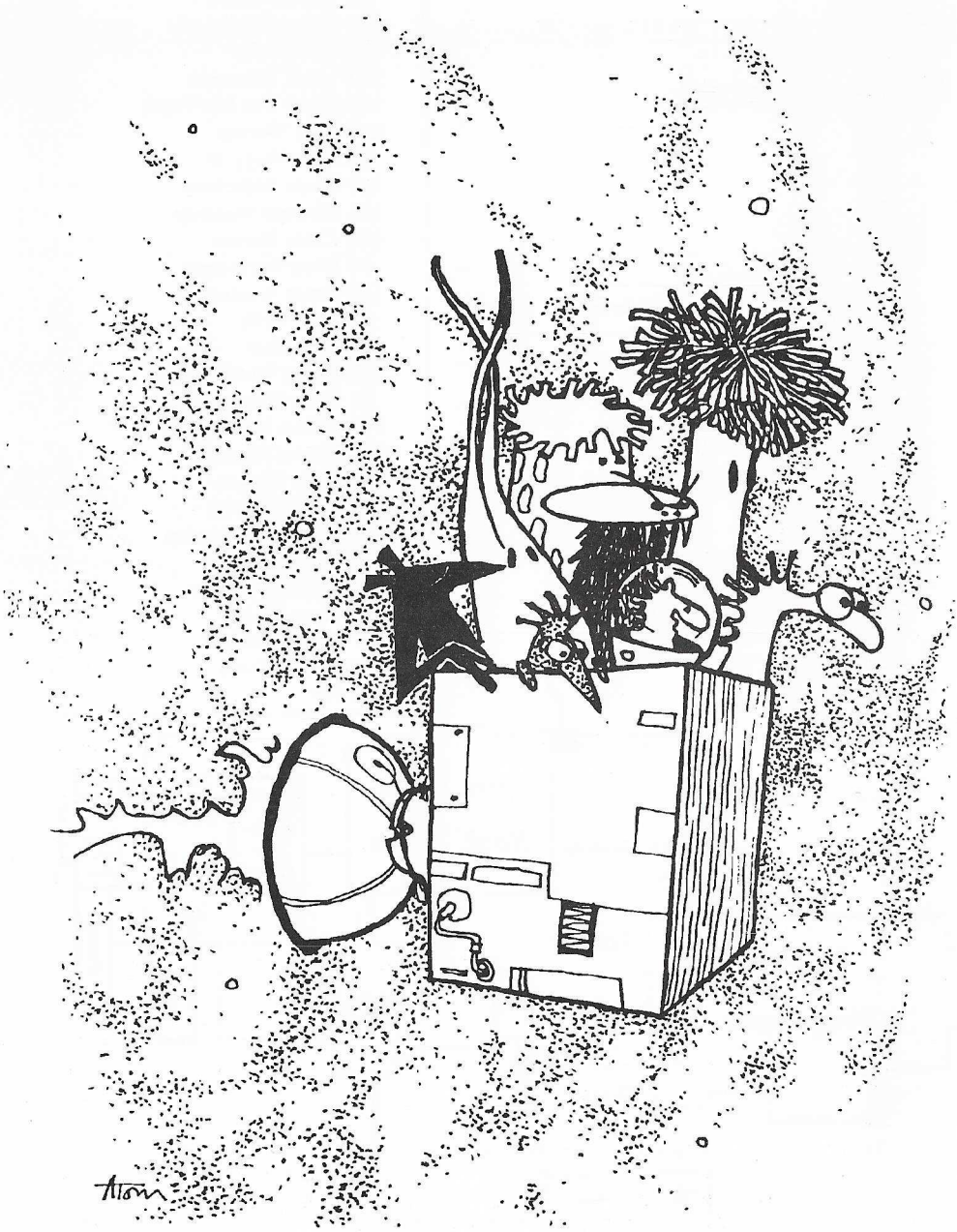

The Mexican Report

The editor of *New Worlds* goes to the new world;
David Garnett explains what he did on his holidays

We knew we were off to a good start when we reached the bar in Houston airport: they were selling bottles of Bass.

Things had been getting desperate: two and a half thousand miles across eight States without a decent drink. There had been a place in Colorado that said "English pub"; but we didn't believe it and kept on driving. This was my first time in the USA; I'd heard all the stories about American beer — but it couldn't possibly be as bad as legend claimed, could it?

It could. No wonder they have to drink it ice cold. The stuff also seems to be non-alcoholic, which must be why they sell it in gas stations. Now I know why adults drink "cola" over there.

We had flown to Vancouver, where we met up with friends. Their car was 12 years old, had cost under two hundred and fifty quid — and we drove to Texas. After reaching Austin for Armadillocon, where one night for the four of us in the Con hotel cost as much as one night each at the Cairn Hotel in Harrogate, we thought we'd go to Mexico. Giving the Chevy a rest, we booked a flight to the Yucatán.

The Bass cost $4 per bottle; six bottles of American beer from a liquor store cost the same. $32 dollars later, it was time to join Aero Mexico. There was hardly anyone on board, but as soon as we arrived the crew closed the doors. We took off twenty minutes early. So much for mañana.

Amongst the drinks available were cans of Corona, which isn't lemonade, but Mexican beer. With only sixteen passengers on a plane which seated a hundred, the stewardesses were very attentive. The beer was free and very frequent. Then on the bus from the airport, the driver was selling Dos Equis at a dollar a bottle; he was drinking it himself, as if we needed any recommendation. It was a one bottle ride to the hotel. Corona and Dos Equis are both very pale beers — one hates to use the word "lager" because of what is sold under that name in Britain — but they taste of something when they are at room temperature. Even at Mexican room temperature...

We were staying in Cancún, which is the most easterly tip of Mexico, a crescent-shaped hotel strip lying between a tropical lagoon and the Caribbean. Twenty years ago it was a fishing village, and presumably some Mexicans lived there. Now it is totally a tourist zone, and even the water is safe to drink.This was mid-October, the hurricane season apparently, and our hotel was as empty as the plane. The balcony of our air-conditioned room was directly above the white beach, and the warm surf pounded against the hot white sand day and night.

"Wanna buy some silver?"

The other three were swimming in the turquoise ocean. There is no such thing as a holiday for a Yearbook editor, and I was on the beach, reading a copy of Asimov's. (Obligatory mention of SF — this is a convention publication.)

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I looked up at him: olive skin, black hair, moustache, dozens of silver chains draped over one arm.

"No thanks," I said.

"American?"

"English."

"Ah! Inglish! Ga-ry Lin-ek-er, Pe-ter Shil-ton!"

"Stan-ley Matth-ews." He frowned, then asked: "Wanna buy some dope?"

The last time this had happened was in Amsterdam, years ago. A friend of mine bought a block of shoe polish for five quid. He was somewhat inebriated. So was I. But not that much. I shrugged.

"Good shit, man."

"No money on me."

"I make you a deal. Your glasses?" I was wearing a pair of — er — mirrorshades which must have looked expensive.

"I need them," I said, and he wandered further down the beach. There was an American a dozen yards away. He tried to sell him some silver, I noticed, but not any dope.

There are a number of things which must be done at some time during "the holiday"; and one of these is buying "gifts". This isn't so easy in Mexico, because you have to haggle over the price. They ask some ridiculous sum for a piece of jewellery or a leather belt. You laugh and walk away. They chase after you. You mention a much lower price. They shake their head. This goes on until you give up and pay far too much, or until you manage to escape.We practised our purchasing skills by negotiating for four straw hats, the kind of thing you can buy in Britain for a quid.

"Ten dollars," said the lad.

That was for each hat, almost five quid. Everything was priced in dollars, even in restaurants.

"Ten dollars for four," we offered.

"Forty dollars for four," he insisted.

Bartering can go on for a long time. We bought four bottles of Sol from him, agreeing to the price without question. (Why can't this happen in Britain? You buy a beer while deciding which books to purchase, for example.) We attempted to bring market forces to bear by taking our custom to the next stall in the market, thus introducing the vital element of competition to our negotiations.

"How much in Canadian dollars?"

"Canadien?" asked the vendor. He took out his calculator and gave us a quote in French.

How much in pounds?" I asked.

"Pounds? You Inglish? You 'ool-i-gan?" He laughed, then said: "You wanna buy some marijuana?"

We wanted four hats, not four hits.

"I smoke it myself. We make a deal."

We made a deal, finally. Twenty Canadian dollars for four straw hats, which was over two quid each. They were made in China.

Is this what happens every time they go shopping? They go into a supermarket and haggle over the price of tacos and tequila? "I make you a deal," they say at the checkout. "Twenty 5 thousand pesos, ten deutschmarks, seven dollars, three spliffs and my sister?"

Trying to buy anything more exotic than a straw hat involved even more complex negotiations. Ridiculous prices were asked for ridiculous items. A woven blanket, for example.

"How much?" we inquired.

"Two hundred fifty dollar."

"It's worth it," we replied. He looked confused, and for the first time there was no echoing "We make a deal".

Even in the taxis you had to make a deal. On our first ride into town, the driver asked for 70,000 pesos. The price quoted in the hotel lobby was 10,000 — a couple of quid. We settled on 12,000.

"You talk different," said another taxi driver to me. "Where you from?"

"England."

Hearing the codeword, he asked: "You want some cannabis?"

We'd already been caught in possession of illegal substances when we entered the USA on the ferry from Vancouver Island. Ours was the only vehicle to be stopped and examined, and we also had to empty our pockets. There were six customs officials assigned to us, searching for illicit imports. And they found what they were after: the apples in the boot/trunk were confiscated.

There was a civil war in Mexico a century and a half ago, and the Yucatán tried to join the United States. The USA didn't want to know. The people who live on the peninsula are descended from the Mayans, the builders of Chichen Itzá. Now they drive taxis and sell junk to tourists.

We bought some junk, rode in their taxis, and went to Chichen Itzá. (Downgraded to "Chicken Pizza" in gringo patois.) It was mentioned in my second novel. We climbed the pyramid, paddled in the sacred pool. And I wondered if I could claim the expedition as post facto research for tax purposes.There is an airport levy of 35,000 pesos to leave Mexico. (About £7.) Could we make a deal? The only deal was paying in dollars at the current exchange rate. We flew back to the USA, little knowing the delights that were to come during the next four and a half thousand miles:

Dublin-bottled Guinness in The Double Eagle, Mesilla, the town in New Mexico where Billy the Kid was captured. The Iron Door — "the oldest saloon in California" — where we discovered bottles of Samuel Adams, from Boston. (Nearby was a second-hand bookstore. I paid 80 cents, plus tax, to take a copy of my first novel, published 21 years earlier, out of circulation.) Then on our last night in the USA we whiled away the hours in Seattle's Pacific Northwest Brewing Company, a pub which brewed six types of beer.

After a few more Coronas courtesy of Aero Mexico, we reached Houston. The other three waved their Canadian/Canadien passports and were waved through. The immigration officer had olive skin, black hair, moustache. He took my British passport and checked my visa.

"Inglish?" he said. I nodded.

"You wanna buy some dope...?"

Renewing the Icons

Paul Kincaid goes yomping through the galaxy

It is boring when people unfamiliar with our genre persist in assuming that science fiction is only about romps in outer space. That's probably why we're so dismissive of space opera. But are we right? Are we blinding ourselves to the fact that space opera is the archetype around which science fiction is constructed?

Of course, space opera does not consist solely of "romps in outer space". We don't actually have any clear definition of what it does consist of, but if we use the term to cover tales of action and adventure set against a backdrop of alien planets and interstellar space we shall not be too wide of the mark. And it is here, against these vast, strange vistas, travelling faster-than-light or aboard generation starships, that we find the stirring of emotion, the old sense of wonder, which is the wellspring of science fiction.

These are the icons of science fiction: a silver spaceship, a sky of green or red or yellow, a hideous alien monster. These are the paraphernalia of space opera and for many of us they were the cause of that first thrill which turned us into science fiction fans. They were there at the birth of scientifiction and they are no less here today.

I would suggest, in fact, that space opera is undergoing one of its periodic rebirths.

Twenty years ago, as the New Wave lapped fitfully onto its final shore the most vigorous voices waiting to replace it belonged to writers like John Varley. In novels like *The Ophiuchi Hotline* and stories such as those collected in *In the Hall of the Martian Kings* he revitalised the tradition established by Heinlein and Asimov. Now, as cyberpunk flickers its last on a generation's word-processors, it is again the tradition of Heinlein and Varley which has emerged from the shadows. The newest writers around, like Eric Brown and Keith Brooke, seem to be happiest the further they are away from Earth, and Ian McDonald, in *Desolation Road*, has colonised Mars in a manner which takes us straight back to the heyday of Ray Bradbury.

Every so often, science fiction takes on the shape of a movement, which might affect the nature of the genre from then on. But it seems that each time the movement has run its course, then the genre unbuttons itself from recently imposed restrictions and relapses into something older and more traditional.

Of course, this isn't to suggest that space opera has ever entirely gone away. At the height of the New Wave we were still getting books like *Ringworld* by Larry Niven, while right out of the heart of the New Wave itself came Samuel Delaney's *Nova* and *Empire Star*. In the same way, the era of cyberpunk did not obscure books like *Eon* by Greg Bear, and the movement itself gave us Bruce Sterling's *Schismatrix*. Nevertheless, you cannot ignore the sudden flowering of space opera in the last year or so, nor the abrupt way in which they most highly regarded of today's SF novels have become representatives of that once ill-considered sub-genre.

No book so typifies this sudden re-emergence as Colin Greenland's *Take Back Plenty*, because there can have been no more dramatic and unexpected change of pace from a writer. Greenland has produced a series of elegantly written but essentially bloodless fantasies

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which gave no notice of this sweeping, full-blooded adventure replete with all the devices and desires we used to find in science fiction. Responding to Bruce Sterling's taunt that space opera was now "untenable", Greenland has triumphantly proved his case. There are overblown descriptions of ludicrous characters, impossibly colourful locations, and more death-defying situations than any adventurer has any right to expect in a dozen lifetimes. But they are conjured from the fabric of our common heritage, and spin the vivid web which is the nature of science fiction. Greenland tells his tale with a remorseless pace which allows no doubts or hesitations, carrying it off with the sort of élan which makes us believe, not that the future will be like this, but that we would like it to be like this. If one of the functions of science fiction is to create an enthusiasm for the magic and richness of the future (though not to predict it), then *Take Back Plenty* is the very lifeblood of the genre.

It could well be that Greenland has written the best science fiction novel of 1990, though it is Dan Simmons's *Hyperion* which seems to be winning most of the plaudits. As a genre writer Simmons has, in his short career, stuck pretty close to the middle ground. Thus *Carrion Comfort* is what you would expect of a horror novel these days, and to that extent it is no surprise that when he turned to writing science fiction it should be straight-down-the-middle space opera. But there is another element in the equation: his non-genre novel, *Phases of Gravity*, examines the longing for space of a former astronaut. It must be asked whether this awareness of space, a sense of the future made concrete by the Apollo programme, doesn't also play a part in his choice of space opera. The outward urge which took us into space and the science-fictional sense of wonder seem to tap much the same emotion. Certainly there is a mystical, religious element in *Hyperion* which coincides neatly with the idea that space opera expresses such an outward urge for the future.

Of course there are writers who work exclusively, or to a great extent, within the very core of the genre. over the last decade or so, for instance, we have seen the emergence of Lois McMaster Bujold, Mike Resnick, Michael Kube-McDowell and others who all operate firmly amid the tatterdemalion flourishes of hard sf. But if they provide proof that space opera has never died, they are nevertheless in the van of science fiction rather than being pacesetters. What is of interest today is the way the writers and books which are now arousing the greatest interest within the genre are taking up the broad-canvas adventure after a track record of working within the less traditional domains of the genre.

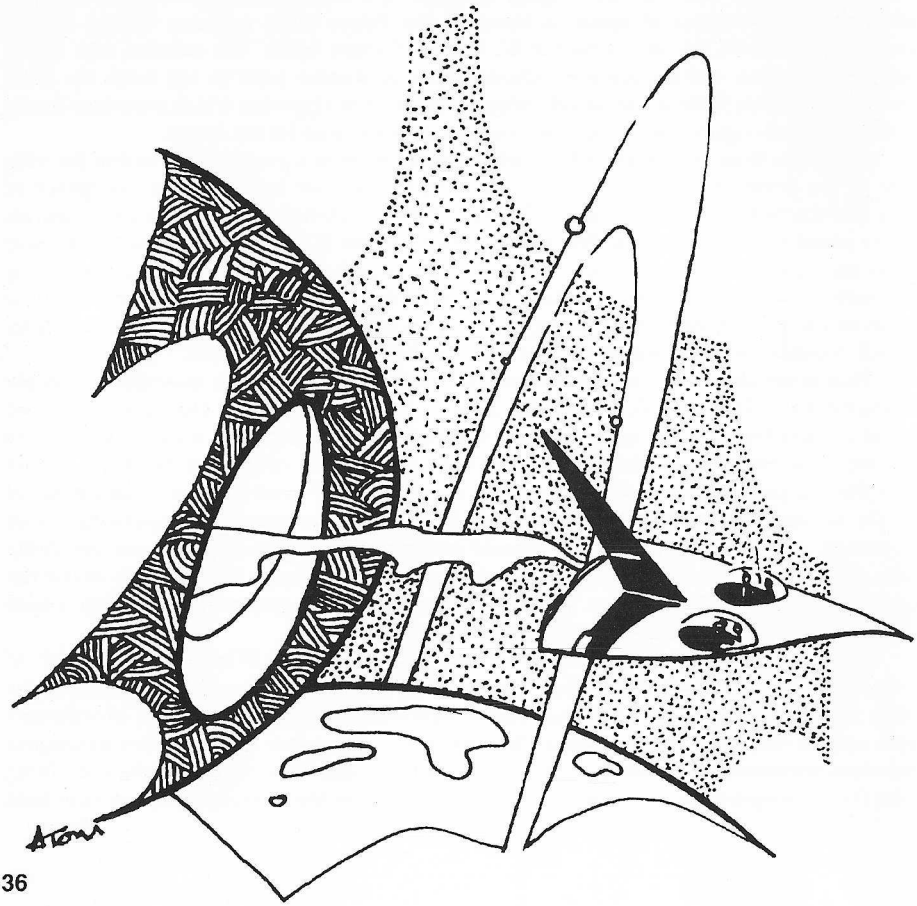
This is not altogether a new development. Even in its more recent incarnation it might be traced back, for example, to Iain M. Banks's *Consider Phlebas*. That a writer whose initial success lay upon the more fantastic margins of the mainstream, who has an avowed interest in science fiction which is anyway obvious from the content of his work, should then write a science fiction novel is perhaps not a matter of great surprise. That the novel should be such an overt and in its way, old-fashioned space opera was surprising. More surprising still was that other books should continue this system-hopping and decidedly outre series until by the time of his recent *Use of Weapons*, Banks had begun to invest the space-operatic with the complex literary structure and dark personal revelations which characterised his non-sf works such as *The Bridge*.

It is a mark not of respectability but of vitality and elasticity. When the older motifs of science fiction seem to have run their course, then the writers who are attracted into the genre by its iconoclastic and experimental possibilities will try their hand at experiments from outside the genre. Thus much of the New Wave was a way of employing techniques and ideas trawled from writers as varied as James Joyce and William Burroughs and giving them free rein upon the mental landscape of science fiction. But what was learned from such

a juxtaposition of subject and method was then imported to the whole of science fiction, and with a fresh perspective fresh tropes such as space opera were found no longer to have stretched beyond their breaking point. Similarly those writers who, throughout the seventies and eighties, have drifted between science fiction and the mainstream, and those who conspired in the revitalising process which was cyberpunk, have amassed a new body of techniques and approaches. These have been absorbed by today's new writers who are now using this new palette on the old subjects which once attracted them into science fiction.

So space opera is back with us. It is decked out in bright new colours, but it is the same old thing. And as long as it can be knocked back into shape with an influx of new ideas, so it will continue to excite us. I suppose in a while these new colours will begin to seem cheap and tawdry again, and space opera will disappear from the main stage of science fiction once more. But a new movement will come along, something in the fresh ideas or techniques of this movement will leach back into the rest of the genre, and space opera will rise again from whichever grave we have consigned it to.

Space opera seems to have the ability to come back regularly from the grave, and never appears stale or withered for long. And it is always space opera which provides the excitement which keeps us coming back to science fiction.



Hack's Quest

One of our sidebar themes is "Conditions of work". **Dave Langford** presents a thrilling interactive simulation of a typical author's day.

```
Welcome to Hack's Quest, the interactive computer game that makes the Hitch-
Hiker adventure look like a Conservative Party conference, and Nightmare on Elm
Street 27 look like a repeat. In this sizzling intellectual challenge you play a
freelance writer with an article to deliver. The editor has just moved your dead-
line two weeks forward because of an unforeseem cataclysm called the New Year.
It is a bleak Monday. You have a hangover.
Type your commands at the > prompt. (Enter HELP to ask for assistance.)
You are in an indescribably sordid hallway. Shabbily carpeted stairs lead up to
your workroom.
>HELP
Kindly remember you are a freelance writer. That is: you're on your own, sun-
shine.
>GO NORTH
Stop kidding around. You have no idea which way is north.
>GO UP
That's better.... You are in a grimy workroom whose stale, lifeless air is thick
with the sweat of old deadlines. Bills litter the few square feet of available
floor. Like an altar-idol dominating the foul temple of some obscene cult, the
word processor broods over the shambles.
>TURN ON WORD PROCESSOR
You turn savagely on the computer, but it is totally unmoved by your threatening
attitude.
>SWITCH ON COMPUTER
You can't do that.
>WHY NOT?
In your eagerness to rush to the pub last night, you forgot to switch the
machine off. It now seems very warm. An electricity bill is prominent in the
heap at your feet.
>INSERT WORK-IN-PROGRESS DISK
I see no disk.
>SEARCH FOR DISK
An hour passes. Eventually you find the disk under some rejection slips in the
far corner of the room.
>INSERT DISK
Are you sure?
>ER ... WIPE DISK WITH HANKY AND INSERT
By first cleaning off about an ounce of revolting tangled hairs and dust-bunnies
glued by static to the disk, you have avoided the immediate, catastrophic
failure of your drive. (Score 1 point.)
A blank screen confronts you!
>WRITE ARTICLE
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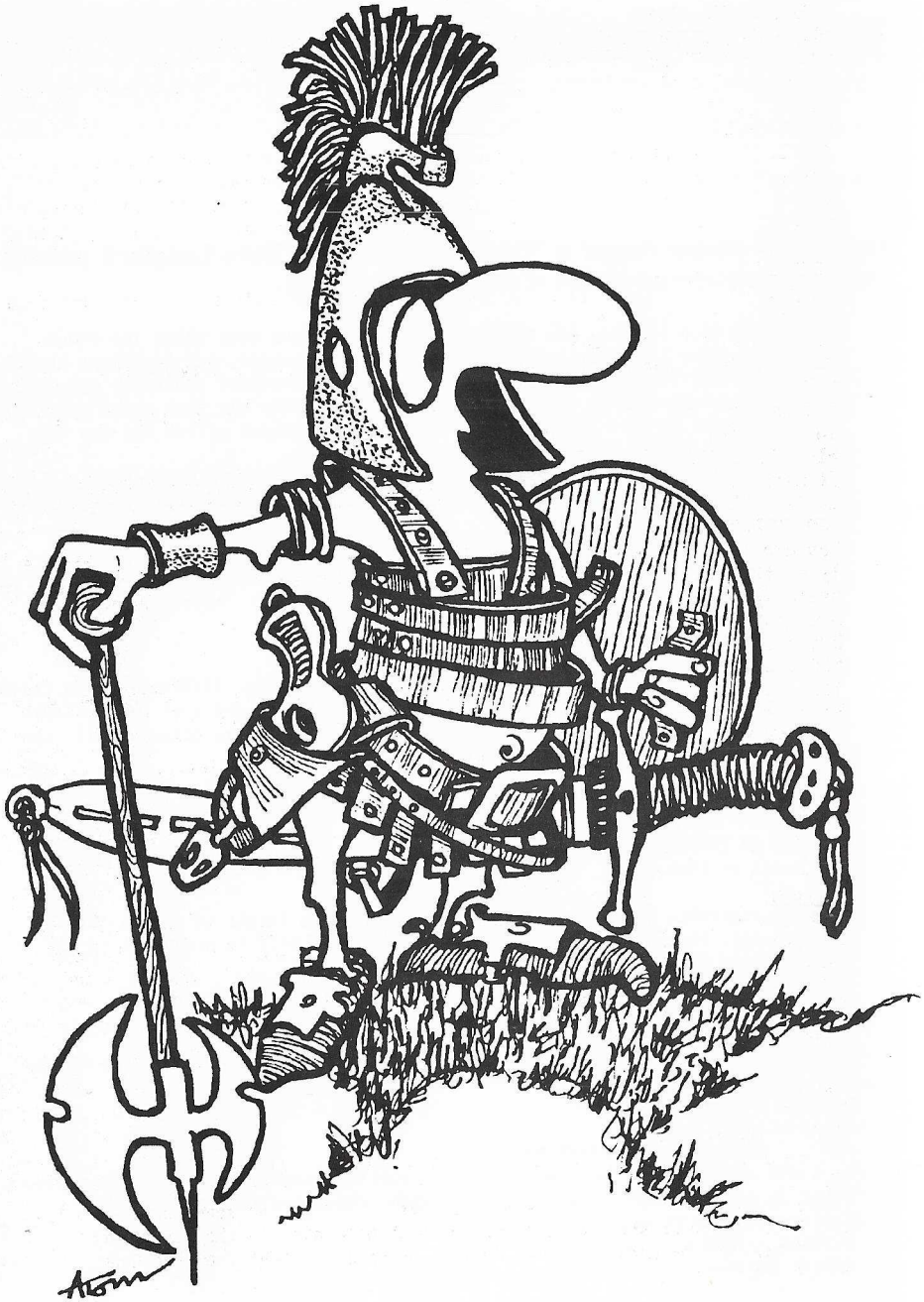
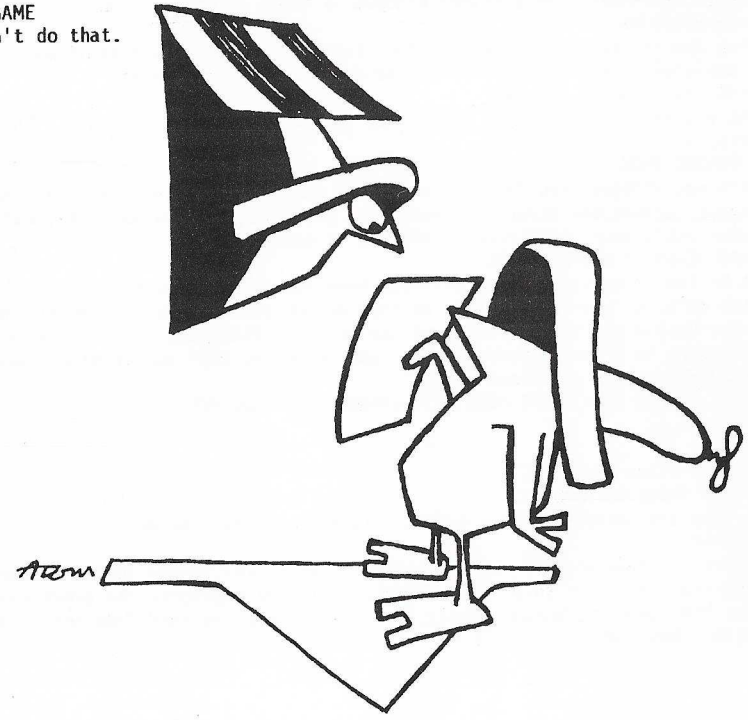


You can't do that. You have no inspiration.
>SEEK INSPIRATION
Where do you want to look? There is a book here. There are bills and rejection slips here. There are old fanzines and computer mags here. There is a bottle here labelled "Inspiration: Matured 10 Years in Oak Casks at Glengrotty", but it is empty. This is why you have a hangover.
>EXAMINE BOOK
The book is Roget's Thesaurus. You study it for inspiration and find excitation, possession, afflatus, exhilaration, intoxication, headiness, encouragement, animation, incitement, provocation, irritation.... As usual, the irritating truth is that there's no inspiration to be had from Roget. But one does keep hoping.
>EXAMINE MAGAZINES
They are full of good stuff. You wonder whether you could steal something from older ones which everyone must have forgotten.
>YES! STEAL LOTS OF IDEAS
Unfortunately your rigid moral code prevents you from actually doing this.
>OH
But as you stare blankly into space, the shadow of a notion begins to take shape in your mind.... The doorbell rings!
>IGNORE DOORBELL
It might be someone with a cheque, or Steven Spielberg's office boy asking after movie rights to your articles on How To Write Assembler Real Good.
>GO TO DOOR
You are in the sordid hall. It was the postman. Why did he ring? Peering blearily at the mat, you find a card saying: You failed to answer the door within the prescribed 0.5 nanoseconds, and three valuable-looking parcels have therefore been rushed back to our depot two hours' walk away. The rest of the mail is all brown envelopes with sinister windows in them.
>GO UPSTAIRS
You are in the grimy workroom. Your train of thought, such as it was, has been completely derailed and lies upside down next to the tracks.
>SIT AT KEYBOARD AND WAIT
As you stare blankly into space, the shadow of a notion begins.... The telephone rings!
>IGNORE PHONE
Are you kidding? You deliberately chose one whose tone rattles the windows of houses across the street, to make sure you never miss an important call from your publishers. Or Steven Spielberg, of course.
>RELUCTANTLY ANSWER PHONE
A hollow voice says: "Good morning! Have you thought how much you could enhance the value of your crummy home by ripping out the windows and installing expensive double glazing, covering up the original Victorian brickwork with synthetic cladding in a lurid shade of pink, and replacing that out-of-date slate roof with fibreglass simulated thatch?"
>SAY NO AND SLAM PHONE DOWN WITH UNNECESSARY VIOLENCE
Ok.
>WAIT
As you stare blankly....
>TAKE PHONE OFF HOOK
...you are inspired with a sudden, blazing need for coffee!
>WHAT?
Coffee. A beverage made by brewing the roasted and ground seeds or beans of a tropical evergreen shrub 8 to 10 metres high belonging to the genus Coffea, of the Rubiaceae, or madder family. Or in your case, instant from the Co-op.
>SIGH. MAKE COFFEE

You have wasted valuable time catering to your selfish wish for coffee. It is only two hours to the last postal collection! The article must be finished and printed out by then!
>HELP
We have already been into this. Remember, you pay Class 4 National Insurance contributions, which bring you absolutely no benefits but are purely and simply an extra tax levied on you for your temerity in being a self-employed person. You are, in other words, the scum of the earth. You expect help?
>PLEASE
You have discovered the magic word! (Score 1 point.) Here is a hint. To solve this puzzle you must find and read something you have not yet studied.
>EXAMINE WHISKY BOTTLE
The small print says that it contained known carcinogen E6234, permissible colouring, fuel oil and monosodium glutamate.
>EXAMINE COMPUTER
There is a message on the keyboard! It begins: "TAB QWERTYUIOP".
>TA VERY MUCH. EXAMINE MAIL
The first envelope contains a bank statement. It is horrifying! Your overdraft exceeds the poll tax deficit of many small boroughs. Staring at it in terror, you feel all your moral inhibitions dissolving. (Score 1 point.)
>AHA! STEAL IDEAS FROM OLD MAGS AND WRITE ARTICLE
Ok. You have now shed your scruples and demonstrated the qualities required to survive in 1991 Britain. (Score 2 points.) You have completed Level 1 of Hack's Quest.
Your score was 5 points. You have graduated from No-Hoper and now qualify as a Grubby Hack. In Level 2 you will confront the thrill-packed challenges of the Plagiarism Suit, the Cirrhosis Clinic and Writing A Novel.
Save position now?
>QUIT GAME
You can't do that.



Slouching Towards Oblivion

Abigail Frost surveys fandom since last Mexicon

Two years seems a short time in fandom: a couple of dozen conventions and perhaps almost as many fanzines. During the period, we might have expected fandom to emerge from its post-Conspiracy *crise de nerfs*, and indeed, some Conspiracy casualties returned to the conrunning scene with this year's Eastercon. And some incorrigible masochists were promoting another UK Worldcon bid, which has grown in credibility over the period, though the bidders' bland suggestion in *Conrunner* 12 that the rest of UK fandom will simply have to fit in with their plans and join the hard-pressed staff remains alarming. On the fanzine front, things were less lively; of already-established traditional fanzines, only *Conrunner*, *FTT*, *Pulp*, and *Small Mammal* reached me throughout. *LIP* seems to have perished during the Nova Wars, which is a serious shame. David Bell made a good summing-up of the pessimistic view of fanzine fandom shortly after Mexicon III, in a letter to *Critical Wave* 13:

> So where are all the new faneds going to come from? The demographers are talking about a fall in school leavers and that prediction is based on numbers actually at school now. It seems to me that a shortage of quarto duplicating paper is trivial. What worries me is that the newest young faned I know of is Harry Bond, that some big names in fandom haven't produced anything in years, and that people who are doing something are frequently targets for personal abuse.

Fandom is definitely ageing, as the *Matrix* survey confirms. UK fans since Seacon '79 at least have held on to a caricature view of US fans as fair, fat and fortysomething, complacent, concerned with their creature comforts above all; contrasting our own supposed creativity and sense of Desperate Fun with their pernickety passiveness. But we're catching up. We've seen the convention-as-package-holiday; London, at least, now has a flourishing "semi-pro" scene which rather disdains the pleasures of fanzines and the Wellington in pursuit of its members' strictly penny-ante ambitions; and the fan bureaucracy grows by the day. Two-year Eastercon bidding has tied up would-be conrunners for quite ridiculously long periods, resulting in a restriction of choice. The last contested bidding session took place in 1988, at Follycon.

In fact, conrunning, which depends on finite resources — staff, guests, and potential members' money and con-going time — begins to show signs of being overstretched. The "demographic time-bomb" to which Bell alludes is as likely to affect convention membership and the pool of conrunners as fanzine fandom (which overlaps massively with "con-fandom" anyway). Recession, inflation, and general economic uncertainty have all taken their toll, of both cons and con-goers. Mancon, with ambitious plans to fly over Harlan Ellison, had to fold, victim of rising air-fares and possibly the slow membership take-up which every other con (except, very recently indeed, Helicon) has noticed. I'm sure we all sympathise with the Mancon committee (and many will regret having lost the chance to see Ellison), but it was bound to happen sooner or later. Some might even express surprise that it wasn't an Eastercon that went down the tubes.

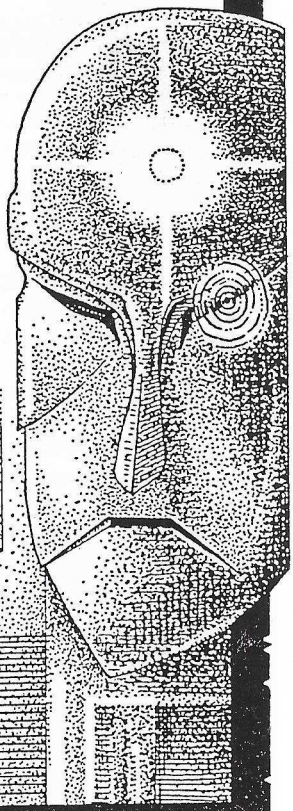
Illumination

The 1992 British National Science Fiction Convention

17 - 20 April 1992
at the
Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool, UK

Membership: Attending £20,
Supporting £12

379 Myrtle Road
SHEFFIELD S2 3HQ



CA '90.

Both Eastercons during the period experienced problems of their own making and from outside. In the run-up period, Eastcon thoroughly pissed off many members of traditional fandom, and (perhaps more embarrassing, given the committee's provenance) got involved in a stand-up row with the Elydore committee over its perfectly reasonable attempt to publicise itself at another media con. (If this was the peace and love of Medialand, some of us thought, give us the gentle rocking of the Nova Wars any day of the week.) Real disaster struck when the owners of the function space ratted on the deal. (Gestures involving trouser-legs featured in conversations on the subject.)

Soon the words "rescue-bid" were heard in the land, with the result that Eastcon went ahead with a new hotel and substantially changed personnel. Sluggish membership figures immediately perked up. So the Eastercon, for which two years' preparation was deemed essential, was largely put together in about nine months. (And Mexicon didn't even say "We told you so." Just as well, given what happened to us the following September...)

Speculation may similarly be remembered as an Awful Warning in some quarters. It was clear long before the con that it was making some dreadful mistakes. Some of its difficulties can be put down to the misfortune of being conceived in the boom and delivered in the recession, but not, alas, all.

It was risky to book a hotel charging over £50.00 for a single room; the damage was already done by the time new rates (still too high for many) were announced. It was entirely predictable that hastily-found cheaper overflows were booked up by the people who'd been expected to sleep four to a room in the main hotel. Thus saddled with a reputation for being expensive and thoughtless, the committee had great fun shooting itself in the foot. Key members were absent from the bidding-session in 1989; the con was under-represented at Eastcon; and the "entertaining" PRs were read as flinging a pot of corflu in the public's face. Fans often couldn't find the information they needed among the jokes. The delegation policy meant that one kept encountering people running programme sectors who denied all responsibility (or even concern) for other aspects of the con, slagged off "the committee" like everyone else, and weren't always even sure if they'd be going.

Fandom was sceptical, and joined up slowly; the con was under-funded and hence under-equipped, and the hotel by many accounts uncooperative (possibly feeling conned by promises of a high occupancy-rate) on the day; and I fear Speculation's reputation is assured for all time. The pity is that, to judge from the programme book, they genuinely had cracked the problem of integrating different areas in the programme — something which my generation of fans have long wanted to see.

What with Contrivance taking place on Jersey (a draw for some, a turn-off for others), Illumination will be the first "normal" Eastercon since Follycon (1988), and looks likely to be followed by another untypical one. Helicon is bidding for a Eurocon. Remembering the furore over John Brunner's 1984 Euroeastercon, a bit of noise might be expected here; but I think the situation is quite different. First, Illingworth and Co are bidding for the Eurocon after winning the Eastercon bid, a quantum leap in tact alone. Secondly, British fandom has discovered Europe.

ConFiction was in some ways shambolic, but it is remembered by most of those present as a con in a million. Gulled by Anglo-American conrunning orthodoxy into offering 17 programme streams to about 2000 people, kiboshed by a US database which gave programme participants ambiguous information about item-times, led by their own naïveté to list programme participants who had no intention of coming, the ConFiction committee had the last laugh in the end, as people rediscovered the ad-hoc, amateur tradition — and

found that it was fun. Stories abounded of panel-less audiences setting up their own items on the spot, of incredible tolerance and general willingness on the part of the pros who did make it (Diane Duane was even drafted onto an ops shift) and of free-enterprise problem-solvers from nowhere. When the official pocket programme proved a snare and a delusion, a gaming fan found an idle Mac and produced a substitute. When a busload of Czechs couldn't all afford entry to the main con, they held their own con on a campsite. Some of the Easterners' enthusiasm and lack of preconceptions rubbed off on the rest of us. A British Eurocon bid — large areas of ConFiction were staffed by Brits — seems the logical next step.

Smaller cons produced some innovations. Inclination protested at the Reptile's description of it as directed at "people who want to become conrunners but haven't yet", but failed to make it clear to me, at least, what it *was* for. Reconnaissance, eagerly awaited and well-programmed, suffered from low attendance on the day and "perm-any-four-out-of-five" panel make-up, but seems to be Most Promising Newcomer. Conjunction, described by one member as "a Mexicon where barflies were replaced by intense huddles of gamers", was a successful first attempt at an SF-style gaming con. Rubicon faded away, its place as the fun con apparently taken by Iconoclasm and its successors. Unicon seemed about to suffer from Eastercon-itis, as the lone bid for 1992 collapsed, but the Unicon establishment (good grief!) stepped in with a replacement. Novacon strolled on.

The proliferation of conventions puts great strain on the small pool of readily-available pros and experienced speakers. Jonathan Cowie complained that Contrivance "failed to attract many pros ... many regulars who add to the event were not there." (*Conrunner* 11.) But pros who aren't funded by the convention or publishers are subject to the same money and time pressures as the rest of us, and can hardly be blamed if they resist the demands of a convention fandom which seems ever more self-referential, less science-fictional. Some smaller cons must be very lonely events for their guests.

A few years ago it was fanzines which seemed to be ignoring the SF world in favour of navel-gazing. This is less true now even of traditional fanzines (consider *FTT*), but the largest group of new "fanzines" seems to aspire to low-level prodom. *Critical Wave*'s "market listings" are instructive and depressing: the number of publications seeking 5000-word stories, paid for in copies, seems constantly to grow, but is this much more than vanity publishing? *New Worlds* itself shows that great things can come from amateur publishing, and the extraordinary growth of football fanzines (*When Saturday Comes* now employs full-time staff) might provide a more recent model for editors who dream of bootstrap prodom, but is the new SF small press really meeting similar needs?

A recent *Private Eye* carried two small ads along the lines: "Budding critic seeks £2000, PC and laser printer to start fanzine". (I wish I'd thought of that in 1979.) Chances are these aren't SF people (if they are and you know them, tell the rest of us so we can mock them), but it shows that the word *fanzine* now irrevocably means, in the outer world, a cottage-industry publication, rather than the means of personal communication within a defined group which it's long meant here. Perhaps the 80s mood has meant that those who like mucking about with words and print have sought these pleasures in a more "professional"-seeming medium, and the traditional fanzine field has consequently lost out on new blood and new ideas. The 90s might surprise us, however. Both *Conrunner* and *The Intermediate Reptile* have shown that "convention" fans can find fanzines interesting; if they learn the habits of personal writing, publishing and response, we could easily be back on the road to an integrated fandom.

Already shared frames of reference are here. Fans Across the World, generally thought to have done magnificently at Confiction, is building contacts in Eastern Europe by mail as well as at conventions. Friends of Foundation, a newcomer among fan organisations, has tremendous goodwill which crosses several divisions.

Both institutions are welcome, and deserve our support. But we should guard against fandom growing over-institutionalised and sclerotic. What was ten years ago a field of individualists occasionally co-operating for the fun of all is getting clogged with CV material for bland team-players. If we want younger fans to join us over the next few years, we should relax a bit and make a place for them.

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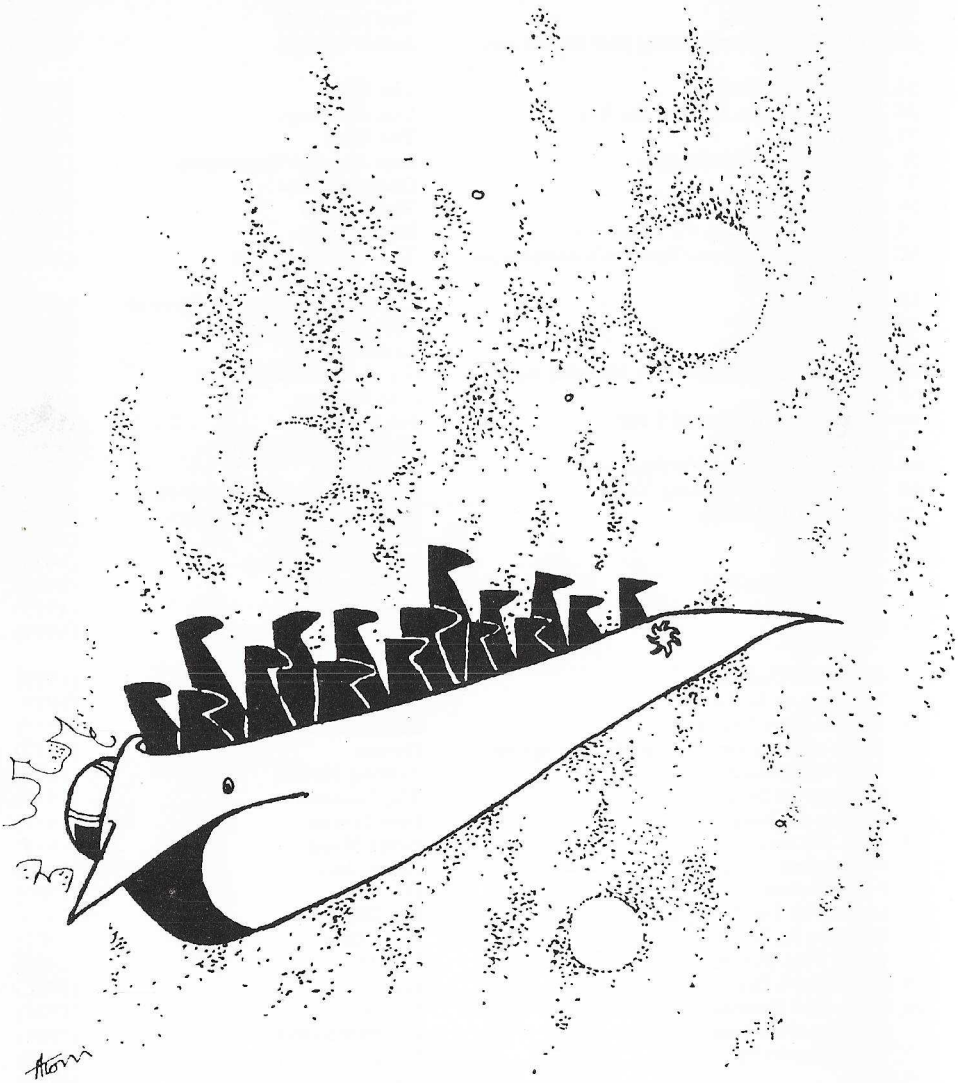
Rock and Roll: The 100 Best Singles

A Chronological Listing by **Paul Williams**; hear them at the Disco on Saturday

1. Terraplane Blues	Robert Johnson	(1937)
2. Rolling Stone	Muddy Waters	(1950)
3. Tutti-Frutti	Little Richard	(1955)
4. Heartbreak Hotel	Elvis Presley	(1956)
5. Fever	Little Willie John	(1956)
6. In the Still of the Nite	The Five Satins	(1956)
7. Mona	Bo Diddley	(1957)
8. Whole Lot of Shakin' Going On	Jerry Lee Lewis	(1957)
9. Peggy Sue	Buddy Holly	(1957)
10. At the Hop	Danny and the Juniors	(1957)
11. Johnny B. Goode	Chuck Berry	(1958)
12. All I Have to Do Is Dream	The Everly Brothers	(1958)
13. I've Had It	The Bell Notes	(1959)
14. Crossfire	Johnny and the Hurricanes	(1959)
15. Memphis, Tennessee	Chuck Berry	(1959)
16. Runaway	Del Shannon	(1961)
17. Stand By Me	Ben E. King	(1961)
18. I'll Try Something New	The Miracles	(1962)
19. You Belong to Me	The Duprees	(1962)
20. Please Please Me	The Beatles	(1963)
21. Sally Go 'Round the Roses	The Jaynetts	(1963)
22. Louie Louie	The Kingsmen	(1963)
23. Fun, Fun, Fun	The Beach Boys	(1964)
24. I Get Around/Don't Worry Baby	The Beach Boys	(1964)
25. Dancing in the Street	Martha and the Vandellas	(1964)
26. You Really Got Me	The Kinks	(1964)
27. Baby Please Don't Go/Gloria	Them	(1964)
28. A Change Is Gonna Come	Sam Cooke	(1964)
29. I Can't Explain	The Who	(1965)
30. The Last Time	The Rolling Stones	(1965)
31. Subterranean Homesick Blues	Bob Dylan	(1965)
32. Ticket to Ride	The Beatles	(1965)
33. Mr. Tambourine Man	The Byrds	(1965)
34. (I Can't Get No) Satisfaction	The Rolling Stones	(1965)
35. In the Midnight Hour	Wilson Pickett	(1965)
36. Like A Rolling Stone	Bob Dylan	(1965)
37. Daytripper	The Beatles	(1965)
38. Going to a Go-Go	The Miracles	(1965)
39. Oh How Happy	Shades of Blue	(1966)
40. River Deep, Mountain High	Ike & Tina Turner	(1966)
41. Reach Out I'll Be There	The Four Tops	(1966)
42. Knock on Wood	Eddie Floyd	(1966)
43. Good Vibrations	The Beach Boys	(1966)
44. Gimme Some Lovin'	The Spencer Davis Group	(1966)
45. For What It's Worth	Buffalo Springfield	(1967)
46. I Never Loved A Man	Aretha Franklin	(1967)
47. The Love I Saw in You Was Just A Mirage	Smokey Robinson & the Miracles	(1967)

48. Waterloo Sunset	The Kinks	(1967)
49. The Crystal Ship	The Doors	(1967)
50. Heroes & Villains	The Beach Boys	(1967)
51. Brown Eyed Girl	Van Morrison	(1967)
52. (Your Love Keeps Lifting Me) Higher and Higher	Jackie Wilson	(1967)
53. I Can See for Miles	The Who	(1967)
54. (Sittin' on) The Dock of the Bay	Otis Redding	(1968)
55. Magic Bus	The Who	(1968)
56. All Along the Watchtower	Jimi Hendrix Experience	(1968)
57. Dark Star	Grateful Dead	(1968)
58. Hey Jude	The Beatles	(1968)
59. I Heard It Through the Grapevine	Marvin Gaye	(1968)
60. Honky Tonk Women/You Can't Always Get What You Want	The Rolling Stones	(1969)
61. Green River	Creedence Clearwater Revival	(1969)
62. Foggy Notion	Velvet Underground	(1969)
63. Whole Lotta Love	Led Zeppelin	(1969)
64. Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin)	Sly & the Family Stone	(1969)
65. Maggie May	Rod Stewart	(1971)
66. Drownin' in the Sea of Love	Joe Simon	(1971)
67. All Down the Line	The Rolling Stones	(1972)
68. Knockin' on Heaven's Door	Bob Dylan	(1973)
69. You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet	Bachman-Turner Overdrive	(1974)
70. No Woman, No Cry	Bob Marley & the Wailers	(1975)
71. Hurricane	Bob Dylan	(1975)
72. Gloria	Patti Smith Group	(1975)
73 Anarchy in the U.K.	The Sex Pistols	(1976)
74. Handy Man	James Taylor	(1977)
75. Roadrunner	Jonathan Richman and the Modern Lovers	(1977)
76. Complete Control	Clash	(1977)
77. Holidays in the Sun	The Sex Pistols	(1977)
78. Watching the Detectives	Elvis Costello	(1977)
79. We Will Rock You/We Are the Champions	Queen	(1977)
80. Take Me to the River	Talking Heads	(1978)
81. I Wanna Be Sedated	The Ramones	(1978)
82. Sultans of Swing	Dire Straits	(1979)
83. Ring My Bell	Anita Ward	(1979)
84. Funkytown	Lipps, Inc.	(1980)
85. I Will Follow	U2	(1980)
86. Love Will Tear Us Apart	Joy Division	(1980)
87. Walking on Thin Ice	Yoko Ono	(1981)
88. Radio Free Europe	R.E.M.	(1981)
89. New Year's Day	U2	(1982)
90. Little Red Corvette	Prince	(1983)
91. Middle of the Road	The Pretenders	(1984)
92. When Doves Cry	Prince	(1984)
93. Pride	U2	(1984)
94. Shout	Tears for Fears	(1985)
95. Fall Down	Tramaine	(1985)
96. Sledgehammer	Peter Gabriel	(1986)
97. The One I Love	R.E.M.	(1987)
98. Fisherman's Blues	The Waterboys	(1988)
99. Twist in My Sobriety	Tanita Tikaram	(1988)
100. Rockin' in the Free World	Neil Young	(1989)

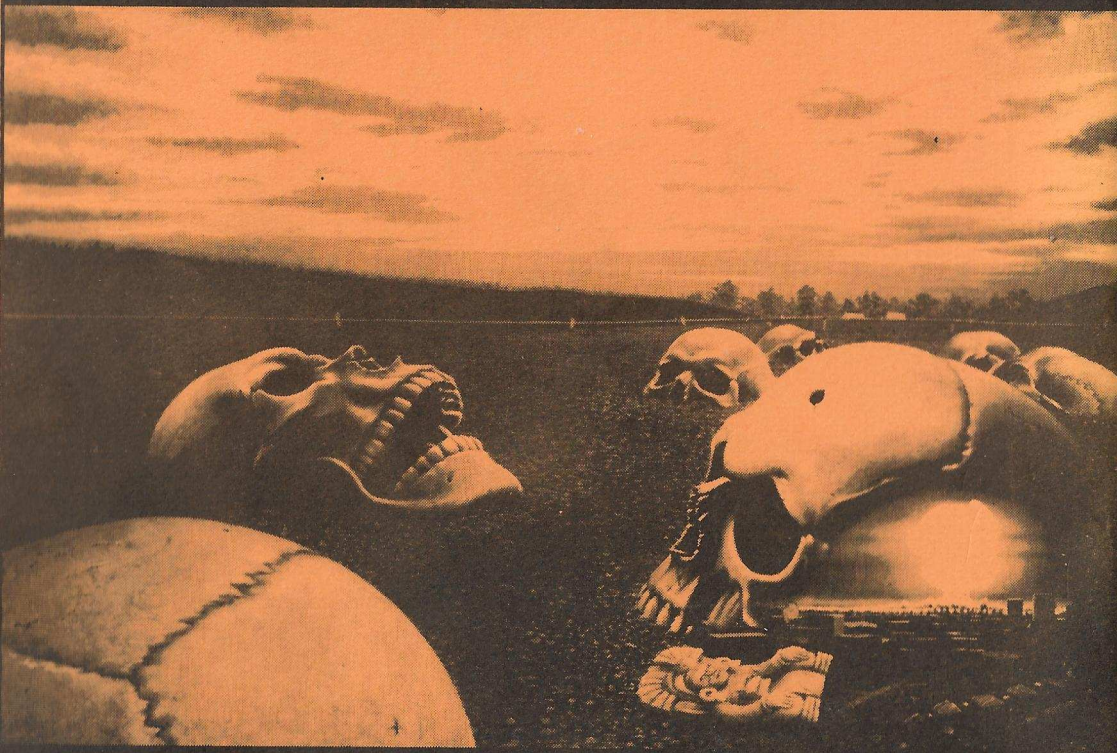


off we go into the wide blue yonder

HOWARD WALDROP

THEM BONES

'A TENSE FAST-PACED TIME-TRAVEL YARN, PACKED WITH GRITTY DETAIL' **GREGORY BENFORD**



LEGEND